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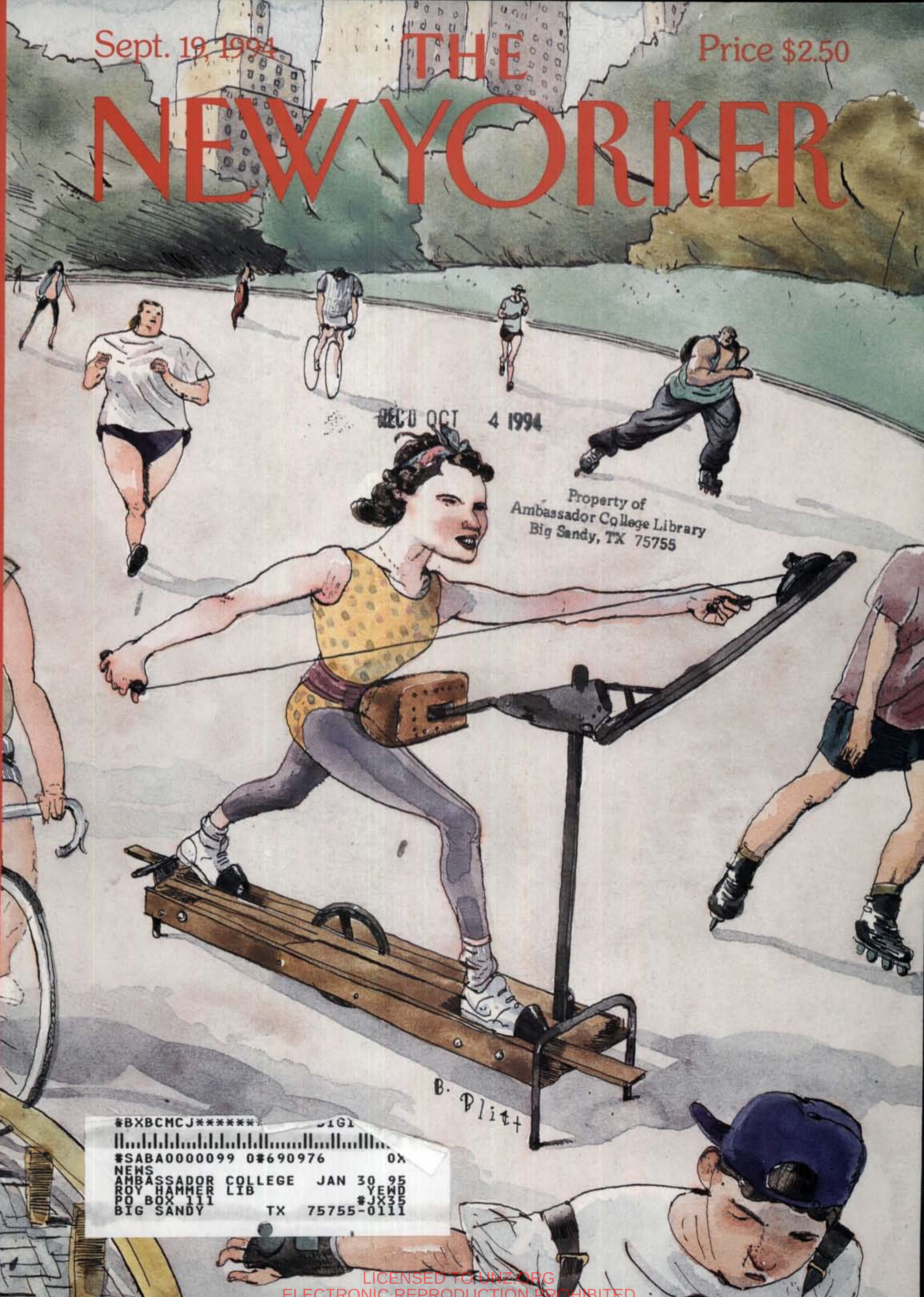

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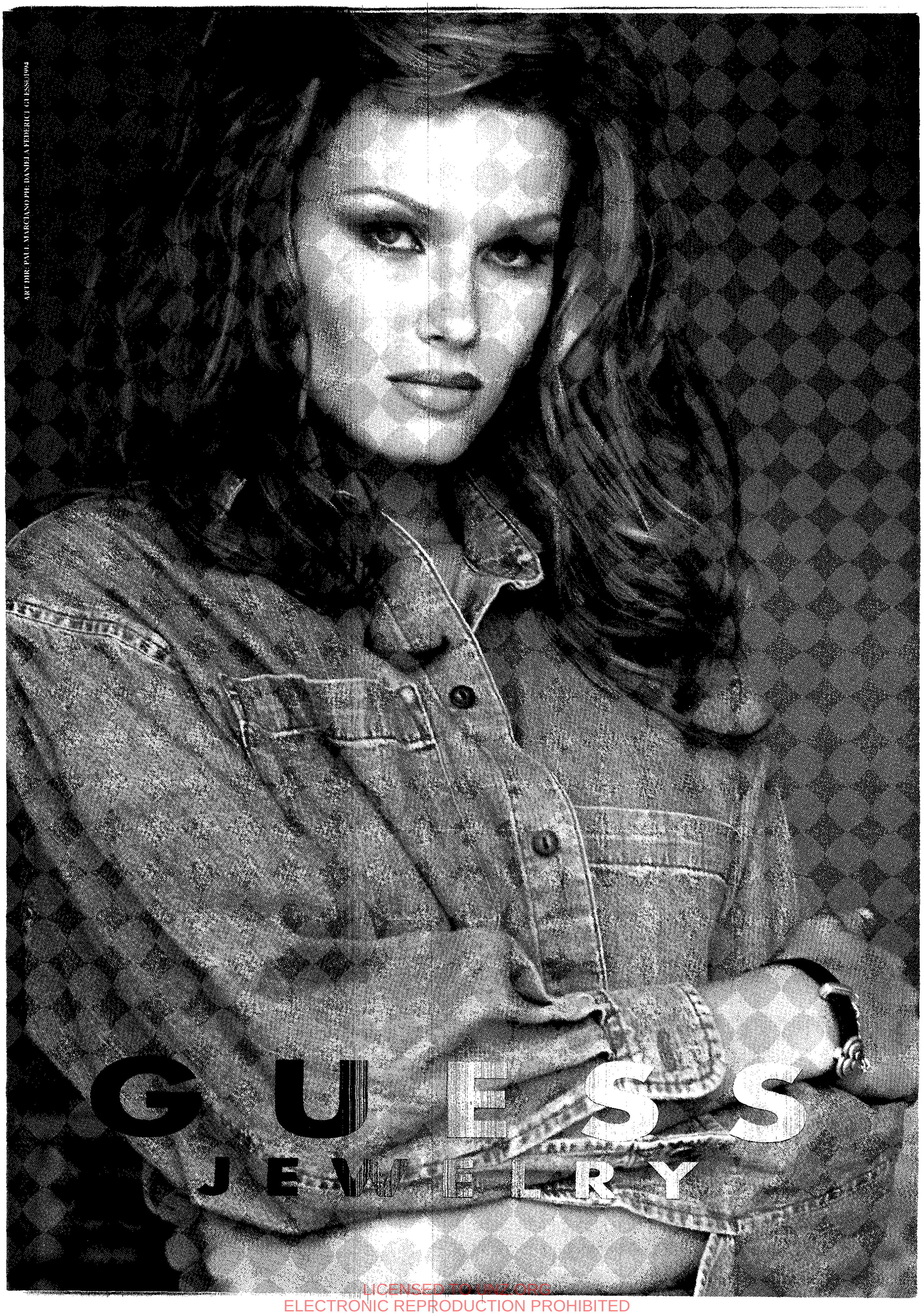
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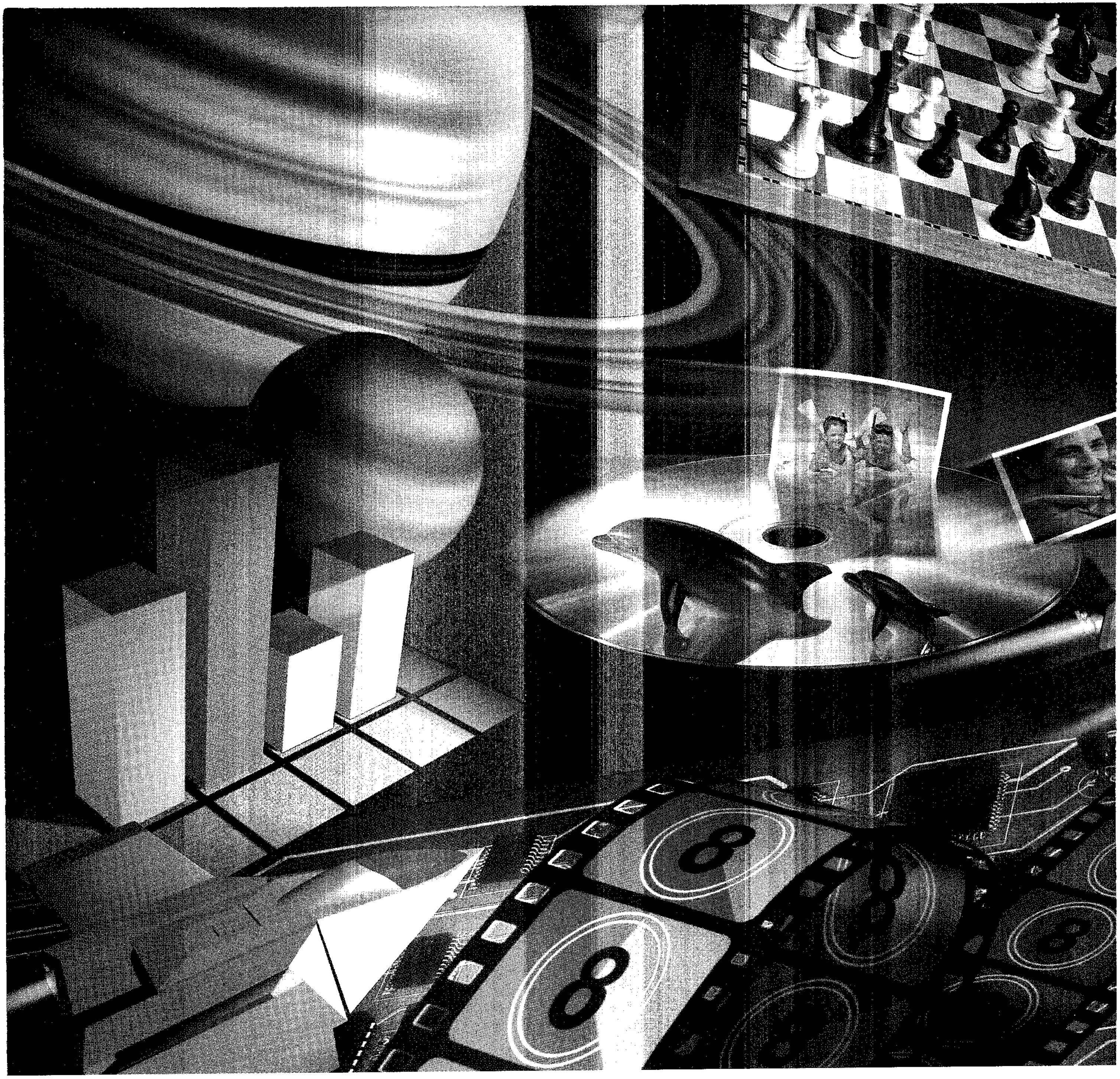

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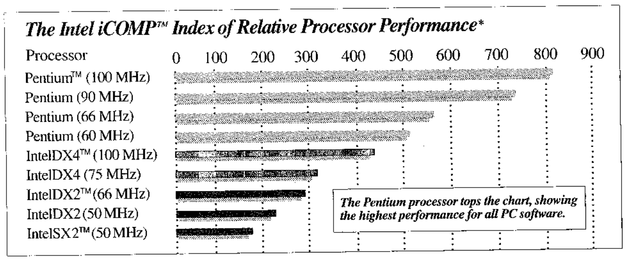

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THE NEW YORKER

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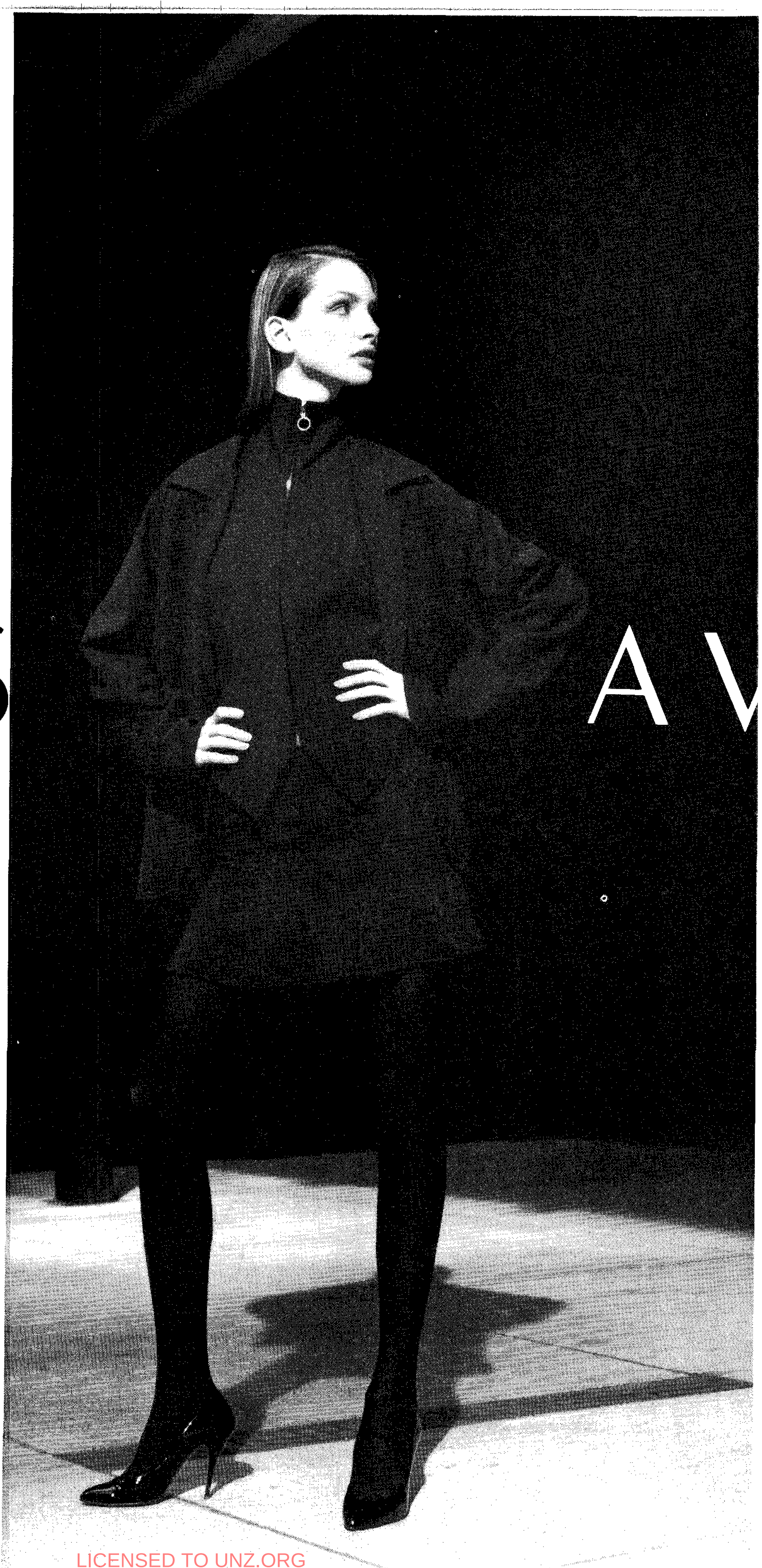

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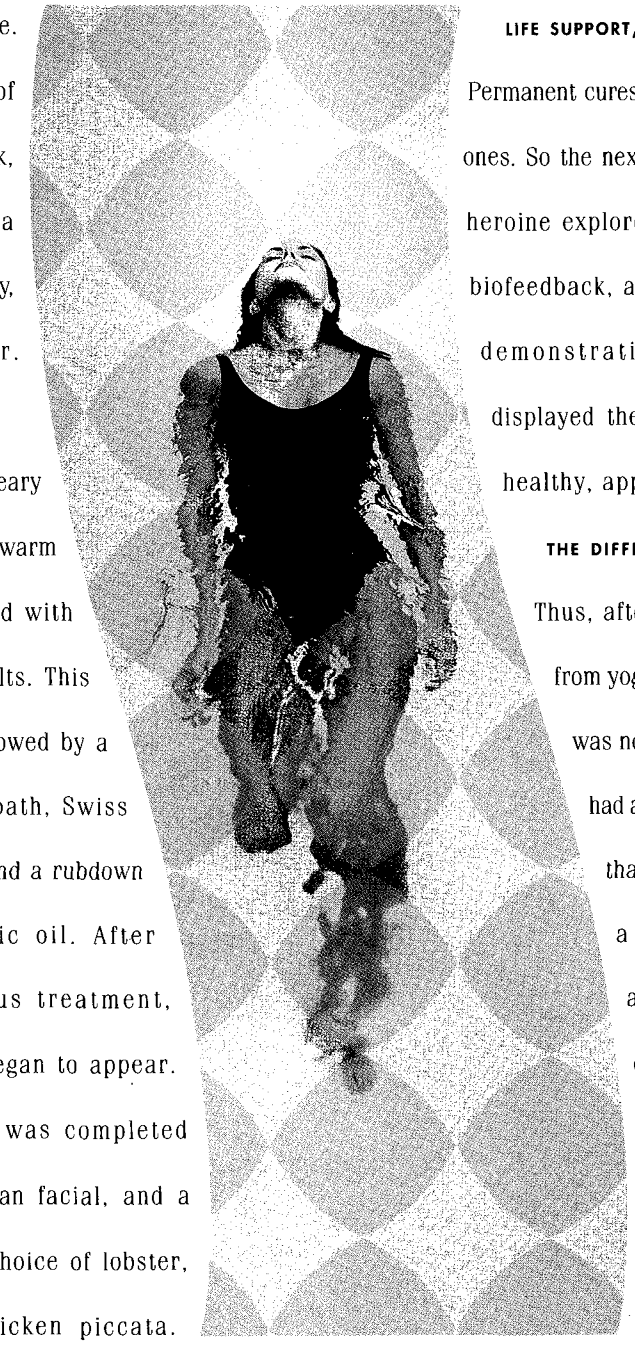
ANNE KLEIN

BY RICHARD TYLER

AT SAKS FIFTH AVENUE

Woman brought back to life after 36 years.



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COMMENT

COURT CONVENES

A small step toward justice in the Balkans and beyond.

THE war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, now in its third year and fiercening yet again, has been a catastrophe not only for the hundreds of thousands it has uprooted, brutalized, or killed but also for international organizations charged with collective security. Both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United Nations have been stunningly ineffectual in their responses to the slaughter in the former Yugoslavia. Nor has the United States used its military and diplomatic might to stop the bloody dismemberment of a U.N. member state. Still, amid the dozens of condemnations, deadlines, and threats that have been issued as substitutes for action, there is an initiative that stands a chance of accomplishing something important.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia was created in May of last year—during a period of high public concern about the genocide taking place in Bosnia—by the U.N. Security Council. The Tribunal went more than a year without a chief prosecutor or adequate funding, its progress blocked by a shifting alliance of governments and negotiators. But then events half a world away—specifically, the transition to democracy in South Africa—contrived to make available Richard Goldstone, a distinguished jurist, whose work exposing abuses by the apartheid regime contributed directly to his country's liberation, and suddenly the arguments against the appointment of a chief prosecutor were easily overcome. Judge Goldstone went to work last month in The Hague, where the Tribunal is poring over a mass of evidence. He plans to present his first indictments this fall.

These will be the first international war-crimes trials since Nuremberg and Tokyo, and they will have the moral advantage over those proceedings of being in no sense "victors' justice." The prosecution, in not being a conquering power, has a practical disadvantage: the war is still being fought, and its major culprits—the Serbian political and military leaders—are free to spurn the Tribunal's authority. But on another level the fundamental problem that was faced by the Allied prosecutors

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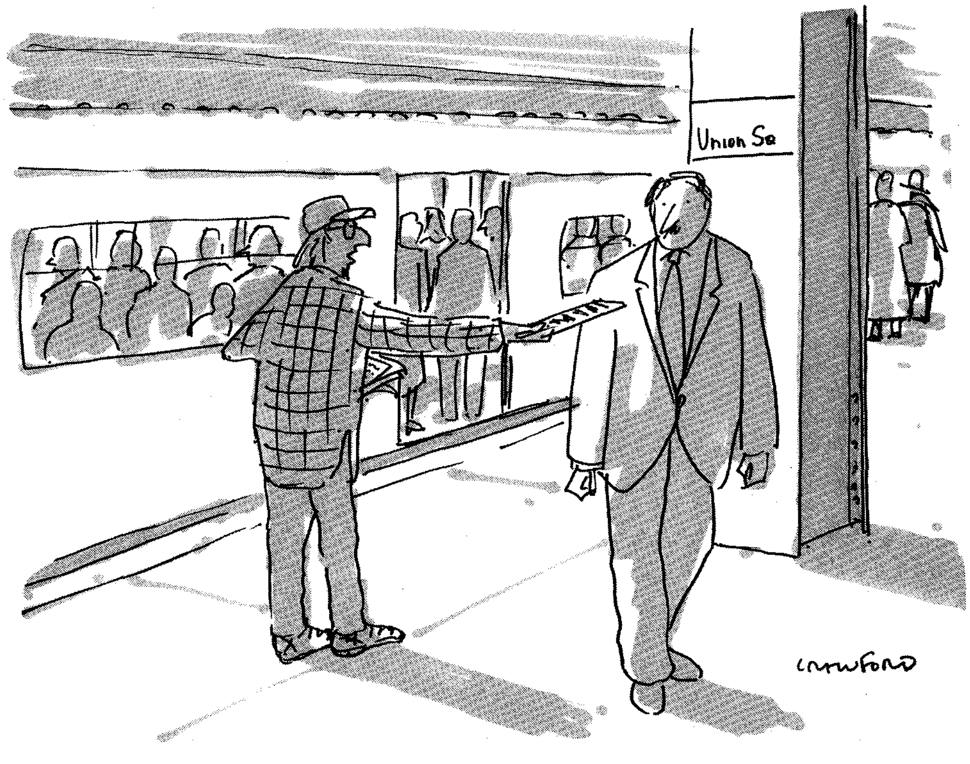
after the Second World War is the same one that is faced by Judge Goldstone's team today: the competing claims of politics. In Germany, even before the Nuremberg trials were over, the onset of the Cold War blunted the thrust of de-Nazification and aborted a wide range of war-crimes investigations. The political context in which Judge Goldstone must pursue his indictments and convictions is scarcely less daunting: some of the main targets of his investigation are the same political leaders whom his employers at the United Nations are trying to entice into a peace agreement.

The "peace process," with all its grubby compromises, is thus in some ways directly opposed to the Tribunal's search for truth, which is by definition uncompromising. The difficulty of apprehending suspects only complicates the picture. For example, Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian leader whose name tops most lists of war-crimes suspects, is reported to be planning to deliver some of his ultranationalist Serbian political opponents, men who publicly boast of their war crimes, to the Tribunal if they are indicted. Accepting such favors from a Milosevic could erode the Tribunal's most precious asset: its moral authority. Even so, the obstacles to the Tribunal's work presented by Balkan despots and warlords may ultimately prove minor compared with the institutional resistance, quieter but infinitely deeper, of major-power practitioners of Realpolitik.

The reasons for convening international trials when there is prima-facie evidence of gross violations of international law—mass murder, genocide, crimes against humanity—may seem self-evident. Yet the ad-hoc structures erected for the purpose have always been shaky, and even in the best of circumstances their goals are largely speculative and symbolic. The "reëducation" of the German people widely advertised as a rationale for the Nuremburg trials was a bust, to judge from the cynicism with which most Germans regarded them. Similarly, the hope of giving pause to future ethnic cleansers by providing examples of punishment is inevitably wan after the butchers of Cambodia, Ethiopia, East Timor, Haiti, Uganda, El Salvador, Iraq, and a dozen other unlucky countries have all escaped international justice. A more nebulous goal, one that has special importance in the former Yugoslavia, is what prosecutors call the "individualizing" of guilt. The toxicity of the notion of collective guilt has seldom been more apparent than in Croatia and Serbia, where people swiftly reverted, with a little prodding from the nationalists, to calling their neighbors Ustashe and Chetniks—highly loaded terms from the Second World War.



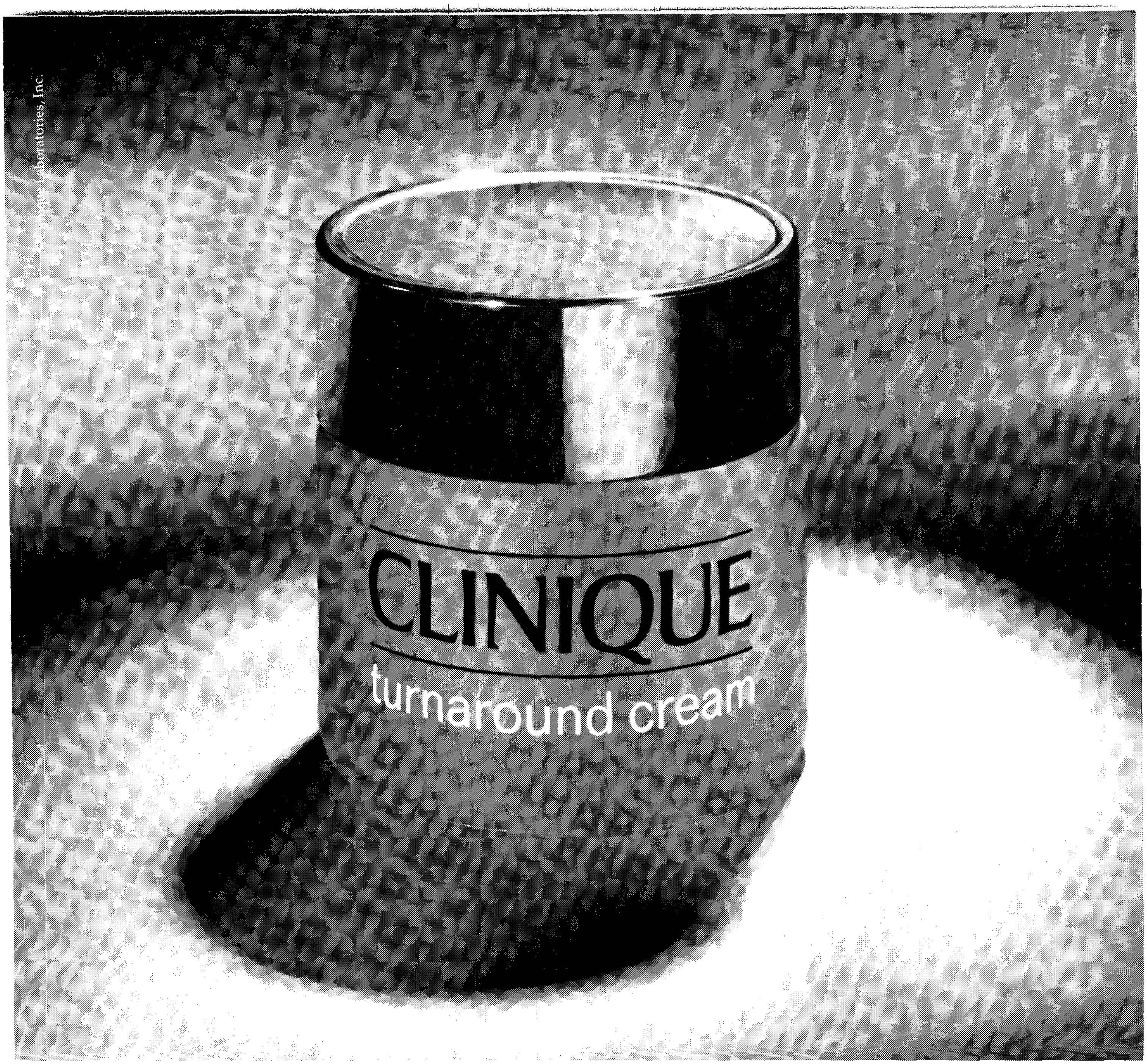
"Coronary bypass! Upstairs! Third floor! Twelve hundred, firm! Check it out!"

The Hague Tribunal represents more than an opportunity to help build a lasting peace, once the fighting has ended, in the former Yugoslavia. It may provide a historic opening for the rest of the world as well: a chance to establish a permanent international criminal court. And the recent drive to add the mass murders in Rwanda, where the indications of government-planned genocide are exceptionally strong, to the Tribunal's jurisdiction can only enhance this opportunity.

Proposals for a permanent international criminal court have been around for generations. After the Second World War, the United Nations was moving toward the creation of such a body when the Cold War splintered its support. For the next forty years, international law was largely ignored by both superpowers and by other governments it inconvenienced. But, with the Cold War over, the moral argument for a permanent international criminal court is now virtually unanswerable. The world does need a policeman—or, at least, a hardworking district attorney and a universally respected bench—if the rule of law is to be extended beyond its present inadequate limits. And, if such a court's jurisdiction is limited to the most serious crimes, the argument, still occasionally heard, that cultural differences make international judgments impossible withers before the global consensus against genocide.

The resistance to the establishment of a permanent international criminal court, however, is not really a matter of reasoned arguments, or even of the aggressive designs of rogue states. Like the resistance to the Balkan war-crimes trials, it is institutional, faceless. It resides in national governments, democratic as well as despotic, law-abiding as well as violent, because all governments instinctively guard their sovereignty. And yet, with luck and a well-timed push from the human-rights community, an international court just might become one of the radical new forms of collective security to emerge from the wreckage of the old structures. A draft proposal for a permanent international criminal court is scheduled for discussion this fall by the U.N. General Assembly, and it will be fascinating to hear what arguments, if any, are produced against it. Meanwhile, Judge Goldstone and his staff will be struggling to salvage something of value from the calamity in the Balkans.

—William Finnegan



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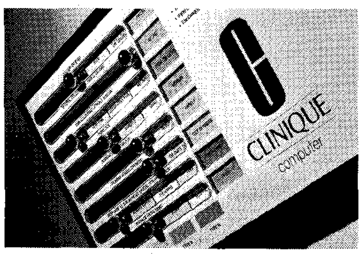

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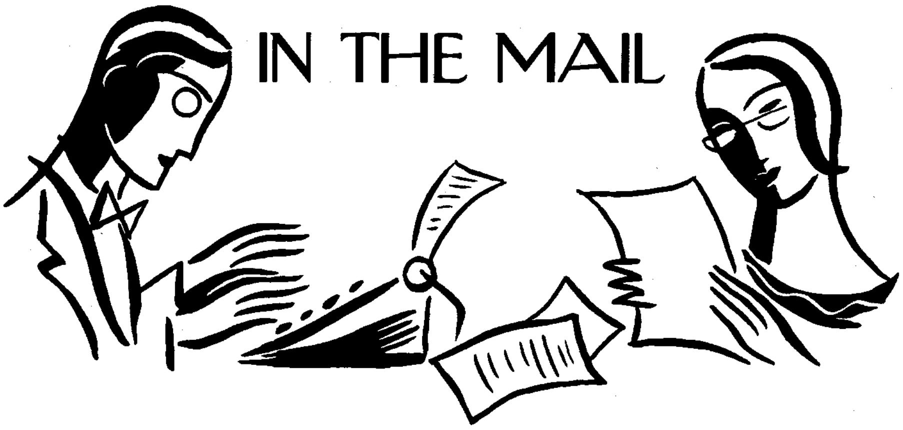

BLAME THE MESSENGER

It is profoundly discouraging to read Representative Kweisi Mfume's remarks (The Political Scene, August 1st) suggesting that the anti-Semitism in Louis Farrakhan's message may be somehow "imagined." People flock to such a spokesman because of, not in spite of, a clearly bigoted message. Farrakhan's rhetoric inculcates bigotry and creates advocates of bigotry among those who excuse him. Censorship is no answer: Farrakhan must be free to speak out as he wishes; otherwise, the Constitution is worthless. What is needed is for persons who have so far failed to grasp the bigotry of Farrakhan's message to be persuaded that in overlooking it they have already made a profoundly crucial choice. In the late sixties, an idea emerged from the civil-rights movement that if one isn't part of the solution one is part of the problem. By that yardstick, a willfully evasive congressman from within the ranks of the very movement that fashioned him seems as bigoted as Farrakhan himself, and, through his high visibility, he imperils the moral probity and credibility of the entire struggle for civil rights.

GEOFFREY RIGGS
New York City

FAMILY STORIES

I read John Edgar Wideman's letter to his son ("Father Stories," August 1st), and his feelings of pain and anguish came through loud and clear. I also have the distinct honor of knowing the family of the boy that Mr. Wideman's son murdered. Rest assured that the pain of the murdered boy's parents and the grief and horrendous sorrow that this family still has to deal with far exceed anything expressed by Mr. Wideman.

FREDERICK FISHER
New York City

OUT OF THE COLD

As a retired agency officer at the C.I.A., I found Seymour M. Hersh's Comment on the agency ("Spy vs. Spy," August 8th) very painful reading, particularly because he implicitly assessed the agency's clandestine service as a sleazy and mediocre organization run and populated by sleazy and mediocre people. Alas, there is much truth to what he says! But something that Mr. Hersh fails to acknowledge is that our media and our legislature are very much responsible for this situation. A truly competent governmental organization cannot survive in a democratic society like ours for more than a generation or so without being degraded. In time, the public will always come to view any apparently first-rate outfit as élitist. The temptation on the part of many (but not all) journalists and politicians to exploit such resentment is irresistible. The result is endless, cumulative, and unfair harassment from outside, as well as base career opportunism from within. And enough maggots can destroy any horse.

CHRISTOPHER D. COSTANZO
Randolph, Vt.

Mr. Hersh's Comment was not well founded. His suggestion that the C.I.A. needs to be abolished is supported only by two examples of C.I.A. irrelevance, from the nineteen-sixties. His prescription of abolition poses the question of

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how to carry out necessary intelligence gathering in a disorderly world and how to perform intelligence analysis independent of the parochial interests of the Defense and State Departments.

VINCENT M. CANNISTRARO
McLean, Va.

As a just retired officer in the United States Foreign Service who served for thirty-three years, not only did I witness the C.I.A.'s public embarrassments mentioned by Seymour Hersh but, time after time, I saw that the C.I.A.'s presence in foreign-service posts greatly reduced the credibility of the diplomatic corps. By lending respectability to this unaccountable organization, we lost much of the trust and respect of the countries to which we were accredited. A democracy that countenances lying, bribery, and corruption cannot serve as any kind of model. Solving international crimes should be left to law-enforcement officials, and, as for true intelligence functions, the C.I.A. was, is, and will continue to be laughably inept at them. Better to do away with this anachronism and allow accountable professionals of the Foreign Service to do their jobs.

HARRISON SHERWOOD
Longstanton, England

KEEP IT TO YOURSELF

In the light of Oliver Stone's remark (in "The Last Wild Man," by Stephen Schiff, August 8th) "No one's innocent. The line between thinking murder and doing murder isn't that major," I would like to thank him, since he includes himself among the guilty, for his restraint in merely thinking about—and dramatizing and filming—murder in lieu of showing up on my doorstep and bashing me to death with his camera. I assure him that the difference *is* a major one, and I trust he'll excuse me (and any jury) for considering him innocent until he actually commits, and is proved to have committed, such an act. Moreover, as we debate the links, if any, between mass-entertainment mayhem and crime, between fantasized violence and the real thing, we would do well to question the wisdom of one who distinguishes so little between his inner and outer worlds.

MARC VINCENTI
Palo Alto, Calif.

HAIL TO THE CHIEF

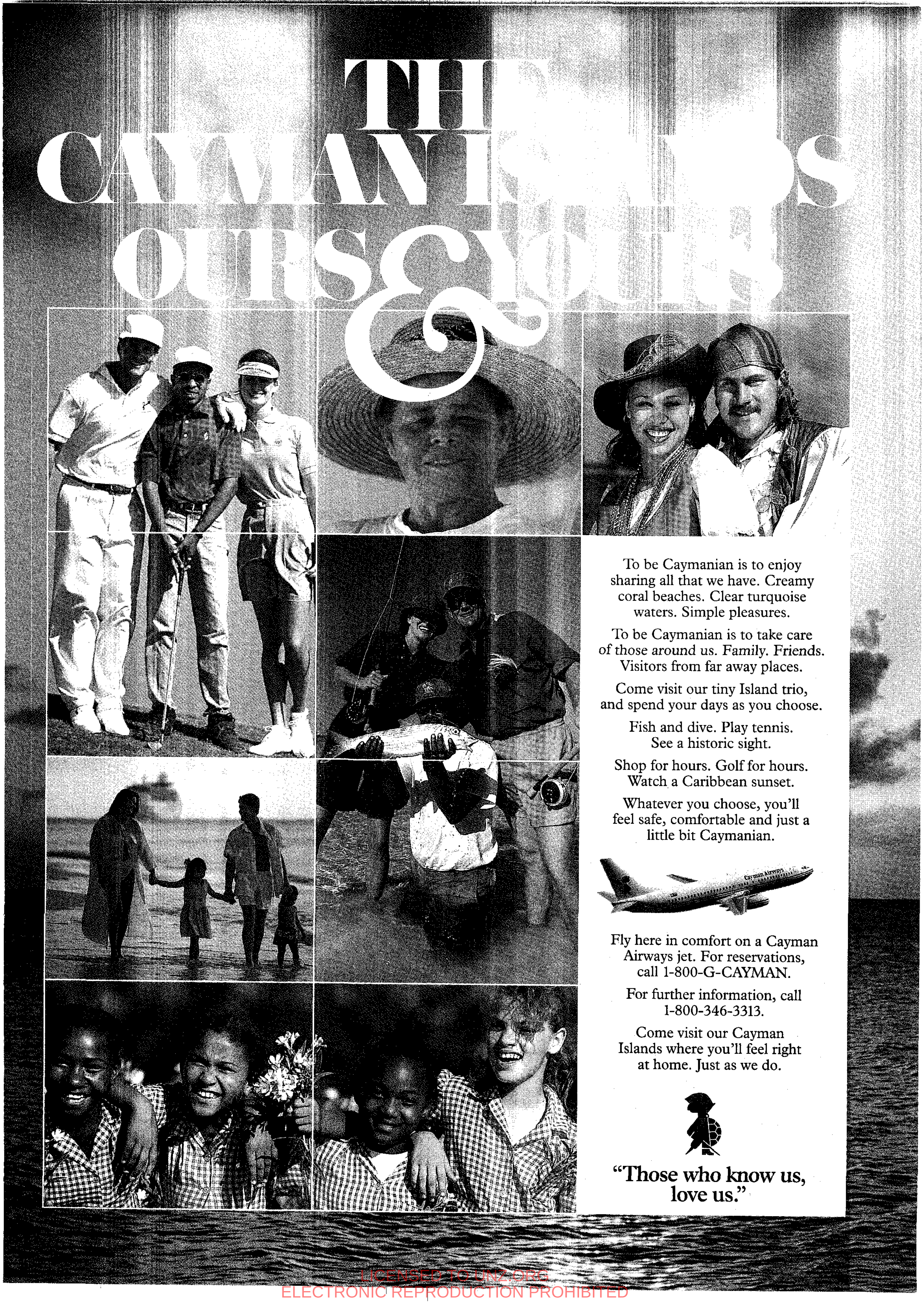
What is the highest honor our nation can bestow? It is probably a place on our national currency. I have always believed that Chief Joseph should be so honored, and Mark Stevens's article ("Chief Joseph's Revenge," August 8th) strengthens my belief. And what could be more logical than to put Chief Joseph on the twenty-dollar bill, replacing Andrew Jackson, whose Indian-relocation policies led to the "Trail of Tears," the most notorious removal of Native Americans from their lands to a place far away. It would be a fitting tribute to an American of great character.

JOHN BRIDGMAN
Minneapolis, Minn.

Mr. Stevens's article on the Bear's Paw Battleground erred in attributing the charting of the American West to the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Lewis and Clark followed a chart that was prepared by the Blackfoot Indian leader Ac ko mok ki in February, 1801, for the Hudson's Bay Company factor Peter Fidler; it was transmitted by Fidler in 1802 to the company's London headquarters and was incorporated by the cartographer Aaron Arrowsmith into the series of maps of North America published by him that year. Ac ko mok ki's map persuaded Thomas Jefferson and Albert Gallatin that the route to the Pacific, the potential basis for the continental expansion of the United States, lay along the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark's expedition confirmed this route. The map covers over two hundred thousand square miles, including the Missouri River and its tributaries, western Montana and the Snake and Columbia Rivers, and the Plains from southern Alberta to central Wyoming. Fidler fully credited his Blackfoot consultant for the map, but the stereotype of the Indian as primitive seems to have blinded historians to the true trailblazer of Lewis and Clark's route.

ALICE BECK KEHOE
Milwaukee, Wis.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.



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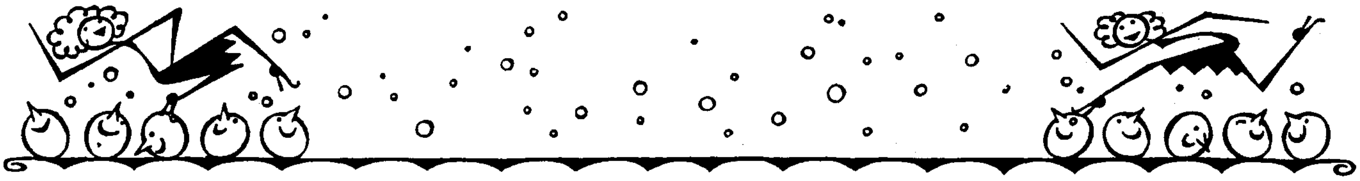

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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18	19	20				

THE THEATRE

Watching the Clock

As the curtain goes up on the fall season, it's worth taking note of the times that curtains actually do go up at theatres around town. A quick chronometric survey reveals that among arts institutions only the Metropolitan Opera regularly adheres to the 8 o'clock pledge printed on the ticket. At Carnegie Hall, performances tend to begin at around 8:05. Broadway theatres follow roughly the same schedule. Most stage managers say that the curtain goes up between 8:03 and 8:06, though they admit that there are nights when the maestro in the orchestra pit doesn't raise the baton much earlier than 8:10. Karen Armstrong, the production stage manager at the St. James, where "Tommy" continues a long run that now includes two performances on Sundays, says, "Believe it or not, even with the million little things that can go wrong backstage before a show starts, we start most nights at 8:05." And Steve Marquard, the house manager at the Palace, where "Beauty and the Beast" is playing, says, "If the traffic is bad because of the weather or because the President is in town, you might have an unusual delay. And if a theatre-party bus pulls up at two minutes to eight, that tends to put a drag on things." Starting this Wednesday, a bus that pulls up in front of the Palace shortly before eight will really be a drag: "Beauty and the Beast" is moving its curtain time to 7:30. Or, more realistically, 7:35.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

A Cheever Evening—A. R. Gurney's new play, based on eighteen short stories by John Cheever. With John Cunningham, Jack Gilpin, Julie Hagerty, Mary Beth Peil, Robert Stanton, and Jennifer Van Dyke. Previews begin Sept. 16. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

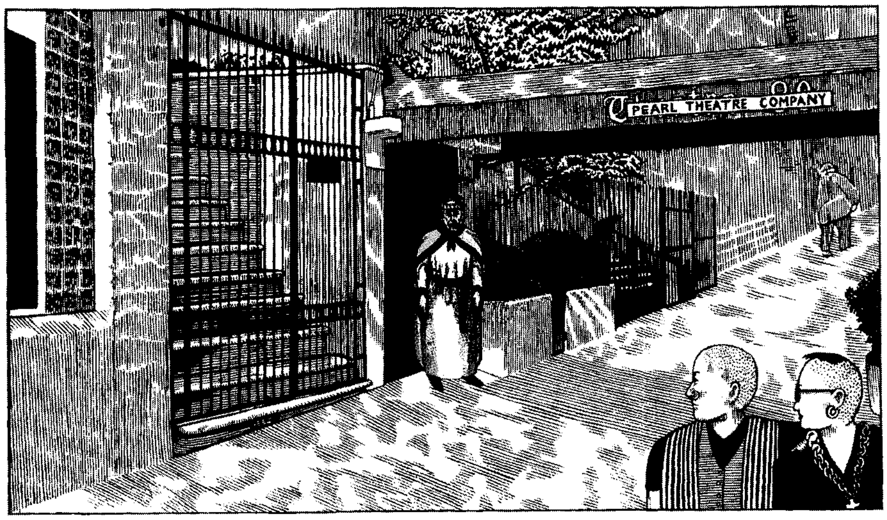
Ghost in the Machine—A psychological thriller by David Gilman, presented by the Barrow Group. Previews Sept. 16-17. Opens Sept. 18 at 8 and runs through Oct. 9. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 522-1402.)

King Lear—The Pearl Theatre Company's first show in its new home. Robert Hock has the title role in Shakespeare's play. Previews through Sept. 17. Opens Sept. 18 at 8. (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company puts its spin on Shakespeare's comedy, directed by, and starring, Everett Quinton. Previews begin Sept. 15. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Mother and Child—Helen Harrelson portrays a Mississippi woman who goes to New York to be with her dying son, played by Anthony M. Brown. The drama was written and directed by Matthew Lombardo. In previews. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 2.)

The Secretaries—A comedy, set in the office of an Oregon lumber mill, written and performed by the Five Lesbian Brothers (Maureen Angelos, Babs Davy, Dominique Dibbell, Peg Healey, and Lisa Kron). Previews through Sept. 19. Opens Sept. 20 at 8. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)



The Pearl Theatre Company presents "King Lear," at Theatre 80.

MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—Six sparkling short plays by David Ives add up to one enchanted evening. Ives and the deft director, Jason McConnell Buzas, are wonderfully served by their actors. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Beauty and the Beast—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince. Directed by Robert Jess Roth. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

Carousel—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Damn Yankees—The big musical hit of 1955 is back, in its first Broadway revival. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of the hundred-and-six-year-old Mr. Abbott). But the cast, which includes Victor Garber and Jared Emick, delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. (4/4/94) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Faith Journey—A gospel musical, set in the South during the civil-rights movement. Book and lyrics by Clarence Cuthbertson and George Broderick, who also wrote the music. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

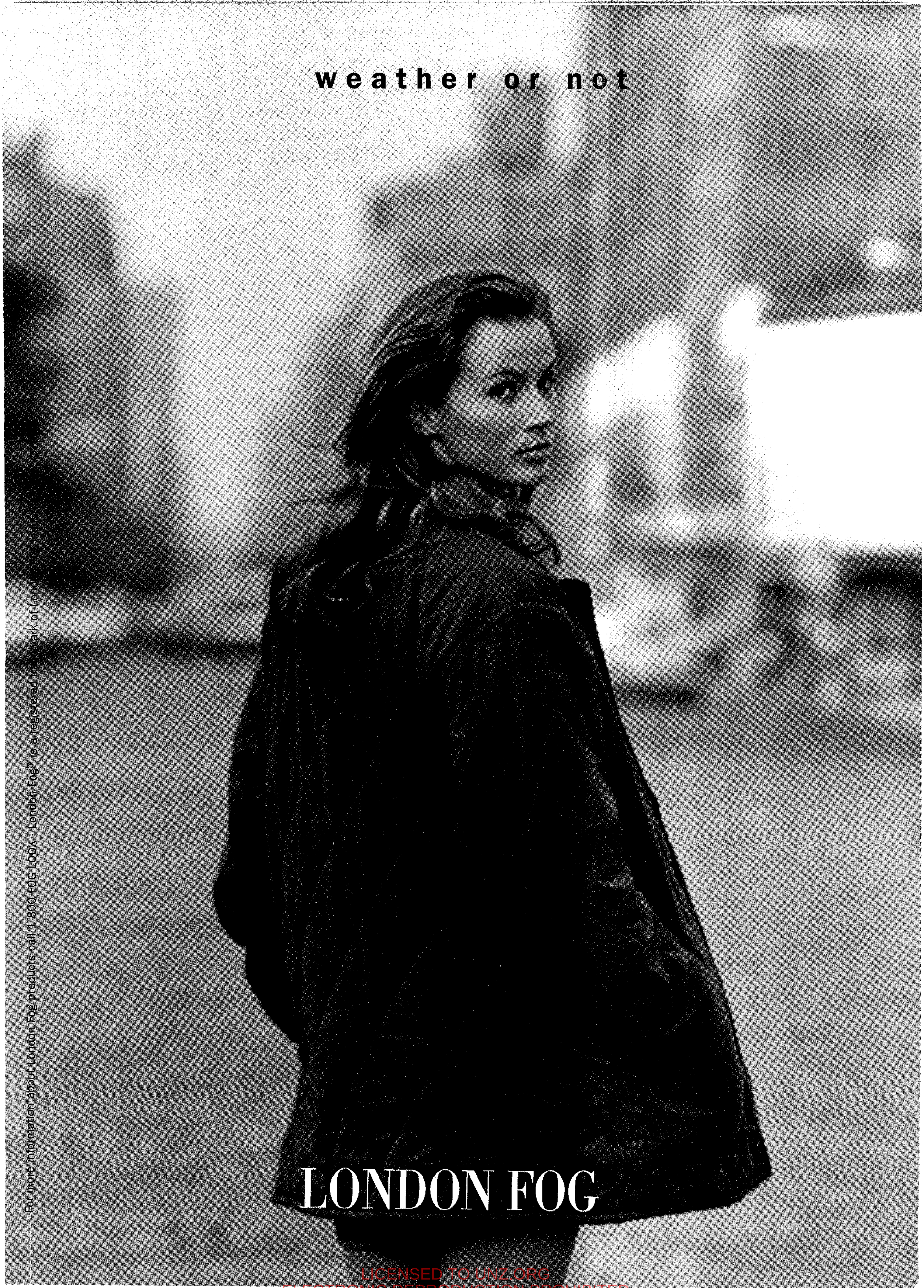
First Night—Lannyl Stephens and Daniel McDonald in a romantic comedy by Jack Neary. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Grease!—The talented cast and the inventive production team show off the gleeful phonyness of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical with unembarrassed affection, and the result is a fun fake that's not trying to pass as the real thing. Rosie O'Donnell is very likable as the tough-talking Rizzo, and Billy Porter blows the lid off the joint with his Little Richard-like rendition of "Beauty School Dropout." Jeff Calhoun directed and choreographed. (5/30/94) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far—An autobiographical musical-comedy revue written by Leslie Jordan and starring Mark Baker. It's a tale of growing up Tennessean, thespian, and gay. Joe Patrick Ward's energetic musical numbers run the gamut from corn to gospel. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

An Inspector Calls—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham, Philip Bosco, and Jane Adams, has ideas, not actions, to play. Directed by Stephen Daldry. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but al-



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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

ways funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (4/25/94) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JELLY ROLL!—Vernel Bagneris stars in an expanded version of a musical show about Jelly Roll Morton, recently seen at Michael's Pub. With Morten Gunnar Larsen on piano. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 777-7474.)

THE KEEPERS—A drama by Barbara Lebow, set in Maine in the eighteen-fifties. Presented by Jean Cocteau Repertory. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

KING UBU—Paul Todaro directed and stars in this production of George Rand's deft new translation of Alfred Jarry's fin-de-siècle satire. Presented by the Independent Theatre Company, who give a diverting and campy spin to the nasty, lowdown goings-on. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088.)

LAUGHING MATTERS—Nick Ullett's one-man show about acting, advertising, marriage, and other matters. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-7471.)

THE NEST—A play by Franz Xaver Kroetz, translated from the German by Roger Downey. Presented by Moisés Kaufman's Tectonic Theatre Project. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes Oct. 2.)

PASSION—Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's listless epistolary musical, in which the main characters spend much of their time singing love letters to and from each other. Jere Shea and Marin Mazzie are in fine voice as a dashing soldier and his lover, and Donna Murphy gives a stunning performance as Fosca, the predatory heroine. Lapine, who wrote the libretto, directed. (5/23/94) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

PHILADELPHIA, HERE I COME!—The Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Brian Friel's 1966 play, with Milo O'Shea, Robert Sean Leonard, Jim True, and Pauline Flanagan. Joe Dowling directed. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

STOMP—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

SUDDEN DEVOTION—A new play by Stuart Spencer. (Ensemble Studio Theatre, 549 W. 52nd St. Closes Sept. 25. For information about free tickets, call 247-4982.)

THAT'S LIFE!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. Thirteen composers and lyricists collaborated on the twenty musical numbers. The choreography and direction are by Helen Butleroff. Performances resume Sept. 16. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

THREE TALL WOMEN—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. Jordan Baker and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes are also in the cast. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ANGELS IN AMERICA: "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PUPPET THEATRE—At the Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7150). Sept. 14-16 at 7:30, Sept. 17 at 3 and 7, and Sept. 18 at 2: "A Popol Vuh Story," a collaborative work by Ralph Lee, Cherrie Moraga, and Glen Velez. . . . Sept. 14 at 8: Italy's Teatro Gioco Vita puts its spin on "Peter Pan.". . . Sept. 14-15 at 8: Atlanta's Suzy Ferriss. . . . Sept. 14-17 at 8:30: Banialuka, the State Puppet Theatre of Poland. . . . Sept. 15-16 at 8, Sept. 17 at 3 and 8, and Sept. 18 at 1 and 5: Velo Theatre, of France, offers "Enveloppes et Déballages." . . . Sept. 16 at 8, Sept. 17 at 3 and 8, and Sept. 18 at 3 and 7: "In Xanadu," a shadow-puppetry piece by Larry Reed. . . . Sept. 16-17 at 7 and 10, and Sept. 18 at 7: "What Fools These Mortals Be," Fred Curchak's one-man version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." . . . ¶ At P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. (477-5288). Sept. 15-18 at 8: Garland Farwell's "Pipe: A Courtroom Drama." . . . Sept. 15-17 at 10: Experimental puppet theatre, including works by Stuart Sherman and Pat Oleszko on the 15th. . . . **NOTE:** The above events are geared toward adults. For the festival's children's shows, see the listings in For Kids.

TIP OR DIE—A one-woman show by Linda Mancini, a performance artist and former waitress. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Thursdays through Sundays at 7:30. Through Sept. 25.)

SHUT UP! LITTLE MAN—Gregg Gibbs wrote and directed this show, which is based on the conversations (taped on the sly) of someone's next-door neighbors in a San Francisco apartment building. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway. 966-9520. Sept. 15-18 at 8:30.)

DANCE

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY—Presenting ninety-minute reënactments of Events. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Sept. 14-17 at 8 and Sept. 18 at 2 and 7:30.)

MIN TANAKA—Presented by the Guggenheim's Works and Process series. Sept. 16 and Sept. 18 at 8: "The Avant-Gardes," a solo butoh performance, followed by a discussion with Mr. Tanaka, author Susan Sontag, and Japanese cultural expert Kazue Kobata. (Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway. For information about tickets, call 423-3699.) . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 5: A free outdoor performance by Mr. Tanaka, with jazz pianist Cecil Taylor. (Mercer St. between Prince and Houston Sts.)

DANSPACE PROJECT—Fifteen artists and companies in three programs for the benefit of Food for Thought. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Sept. 16-18 at 8:30.)

BERTRAM ROSS AND DEBORAH ZALL—In "Poems, Proverbs, and Prayers," a program of dance/theatre works by Jane Dudley, Anna Sokolow, Mr. Ross, and Ms. Zall. With John Giudice. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Sept. 17 at 8 and Sept. 18 at 3.)

MALLIKA SARABHAI AND THE DARPANA TROUPE—An evening of South Indian classical dances and new works. (Haft Auditorium, Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. Sept. 17 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 545-7536.)

"THE BUGS OF NEW YORK"—Jennifer Schlosberg's "ballet," in which a "chorus" of Volkswagen Beetles will follow color-coded maps along the dance route. Presented by Dancing in the Streets. (Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island. Sept. 18 at 3. For further information, call 989-6830.)

NIGHT LIFE

Classic

ACCORDING to Lena Horne, when Blue Note Records signed her early this year, she warned its president, Bruce Lundvall, "I'm not a hip-hop singer, and I don't do rock and roll." Miss Horne says that he told her not to worry: "Lena, those old songs are coming back." Still, the singer, who is seventy-seven years old, does not expect to have the sort of transgenerational success that her longtime friend Tony Bennett is enjoying. "I told Tony a long time ago that he was the best singer around," Miss Horne says affectionately. "Men have a certain edge in this business," she adds. "A man can age gracefully, but people are a little suspicious about a woman aging—especially a woman who originally had a reputation for being handsome. They think that time has taken part of your music away."

New York audiences will find out how little time has taken from Lena Horne when she performs at Carnegie Hall on September 16 and 17. But the good news is apparent to anybody who has heard "We'll Be Together Again," her first Blue Note release. It's a wise and swinging collection, which serves as an homage to the spirit of Miss Horne's musical mentor, Billy Strayhorn. The singer offers a heartbreaking take on the Ellington-Strayhorn ballad "Something to Live For" and strolls through the blues garden of Strayhorn's "You're the One." As for Stephen Sondheim, she kicks his breezy "Old Friend" clear into next week.

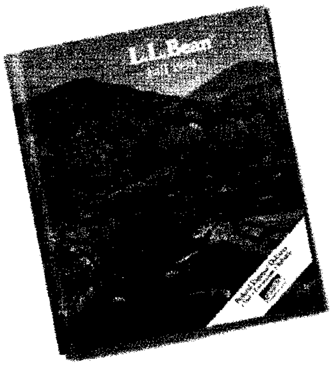
CONCERTS

JOHNNY CASH—"American Recordings," the new album presenting a stripped-down and unplugged Johnny Cash, alone at the microphone with an acoustic guitar, is being hailed as a revelation—which is a bit of a joke, considering the minimal backup on most of Cash's great hits for Columbia Records. Still, the album is a concentrated dose of the doom and gloom that lurked even in Cash's inspirational material. He's no moping folkie, however, not by a long shot, and his rowdy rockabilly spirit should keep the funereal woe from swamping the proceedings. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 14 at 8.)

NAMGYAL MONKS—The Namgyal Monastery—which celebrates rituals for the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India, the home of the Tibetan government-in-exile—sent eight of its saffron-and-maroon-robed monks on tour with the Lollapalooza festival this summer. This week, the unlikeliest of alternative acts has the stage to itself, performing excerpts from traditional rituals that involve meditative trance, fanciful costumes, vigorous dancing, and monophonic chant punctuated by clamorous bursts of winds and percussion. (Loeb Student Center Auditorium, New York University, Washington Sq. at La Guardia Pl. 998-4949. Sept. 16 at 8. . . . ¶ Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Sept. 17 at 4 and 8.)

VILLAGE JAZZ FESTIVAL—The funk will be flying—jazz funk, that is—when saxophonists Stanley Turrentine and Eddie Harris take the stage. Both men are out to prove that they've retained the chops they first demon-

L.L.Discoveries

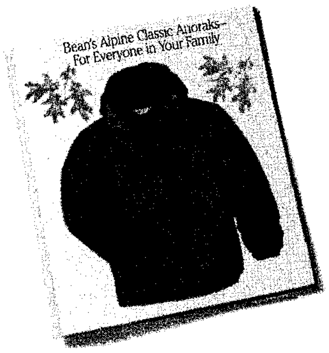


L.L.Change of Season

L.L.Places to Go

New Sportsmen's Garment Bag

L.L.On the Road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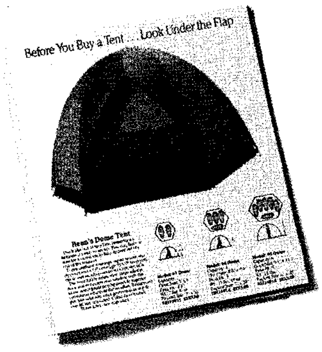
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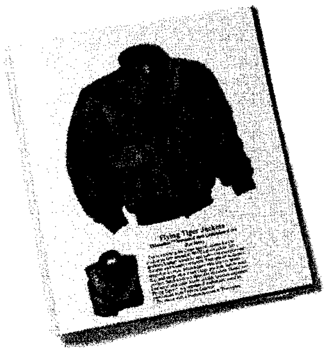
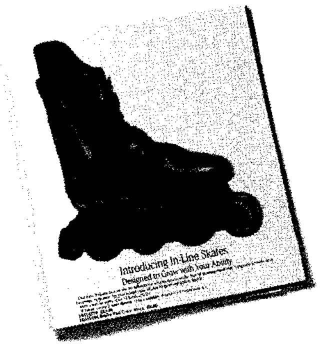
L.L.Outdoors

L.L.Indoors

L.L.After School



L.L.Classic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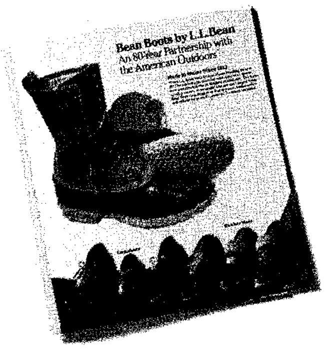
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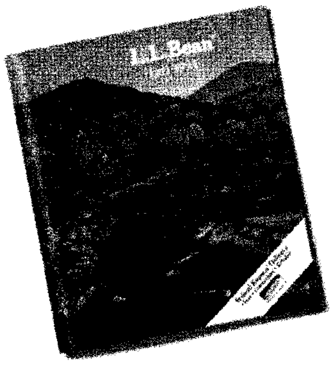

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

strated back in the sixties. The majestic Cedar Walton trio will provide Swiss-watch swing. With the Village Jazz Festival All-Stars (David Sanchez, Abraham Burton, Nicholas Payton, Renée Rosnes, Peter Washington, and Greg Hutchinson). (Washington Square Park. Sept. 19, from 4 to 7. No tickets necessary. Rain date, Sept. 20.)

Jimmy Heath Quartet—Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. Sept. 16 at 1 P.M. No tickets necessary.

Seventies Dance Party—K.C. and the Sunshine Band, Gloria Gaynor, Thelma Houston, the Hues Corporation, Jean Knight, and others. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Sept. 16-17 at 8.)

Lena Horne—With the Count Basie Orchestra, led by Frank Foster. New York Voices will open. (Carnegie Hall. Sept. 16-17 at 8.)

Whitney Houston—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Sept. 16-17, Sept. 20-21, Sept. 23-24, and Sept. 27, all at 8.

Burning Spear—With Mystic Revealers. (Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. Sept. 16 at 10. For tickets, call 307-7171.)

Sarah McLachlan—With Single Gun Theory. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Sept. 17 at 8.)

CLUBS

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—In the heart of the theatre district, a haven for those whose musical tastes run left of "Tommy." **BOINGO** (formerly known as Oingo Boingo) stops by on Sept. 16. Ever since Danny Elfman conquered Hollywood with his Gothic film scores and became a modern-day Bernard Herrmann, fans of the frenetic I-just-drank-a-pint-of-hot-sauce chaos of an Oingo Boingo concert have been wondering if the band would ever tour again. It's been years since Elfman and company last blew through town, but it was probably worth the wait. The band's excellent new CD, "Boingo," seems inspired by Elfman's soundtrack work, particularly his score for Tim Burton's "The Nightmare Before Christmas." It's a ripe mix of grandiose arrangements, thunderous dynamics, and theatrical vocals, all of which should sound especially good live. For concert information, call 249-8870.

A.K.A., 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Jazz, hip-hop, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. Local R. & B. favorite **MILO Z** drops by on Sept. 16.

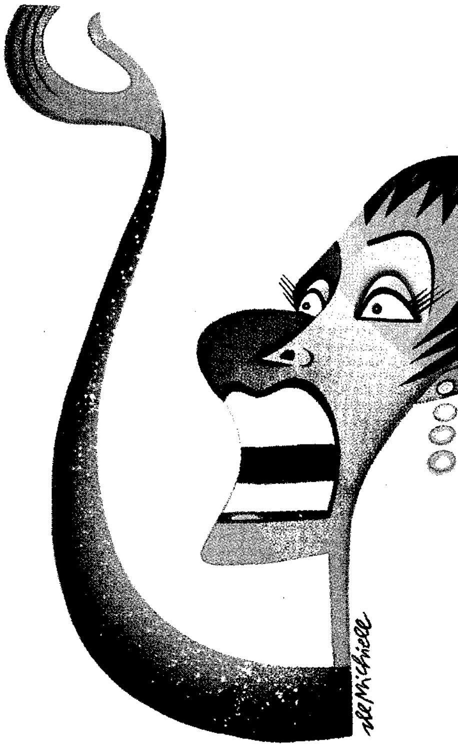
Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. On Sept. 16: **ATLANTIC BRIDGE.**

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. On Sept. 16, catch **JULES SHEAR,** a witty and vastly underappreciated singer-songwriter in the Costello/Parker mold, whose songs have been huge hits for lesser artists. His new album, "Healing Bones," is predictably rife with insinuating melodies and clever but poignant lyrics. Fledgling folk-rocker **PAULA COLE,** no slouch herself, will open for Shear. On Sept. 17, an all-star blues-rock lineup: **AL KOOPER, HARVEY BROOKS, ANTON FIG,** and **JIMMY VIVINO.** On Sept. 19: **J. J. CALE** arrives. Cale's songs have been covered by Eric Clapton, Johnny Cash, and Bryan Ferry, among others, but in his singer-guitarist guise, the writer of "After Midnight" and "Cocaine" is unfamiliar to most. That's a shame, because Cale's dry, gritty vocals and robust, lyrical playing suit his material to a tee. For proof, pick up his new album, "Closer to You," and catch this show. With Duke Robillard.

Brownies, 169 Ave. A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—Inching closer and closer to respectability, this former East Village dive now features a new stage, a beefed-up P.A. system, and a steady lineup of hardcore bands so hungry for the big money you can see the dollar signs in their eyes. On Sept. 17: **CHERRY RED, PILL BOX,** and **THE SENDERS.** On Sept. 20: **TOO MUCH JOY.**

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. On Sept. 20: singer-songwriter **CAROLINE HORN.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. On Sept. 16: a profoundly noisy evening with **BLACK VELVET FLAG.** . . . ¶ Next door, at CB's Gallery, on Sept. 20, **FIVE CHINESE BROTHERS** settle in for a set of foot-tapping, twangy guitar music.



Lena Horne at Carnegie Hall.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (974-9755)—A new palace dedicated to the music of the Windy City. On Sept. 14-17: spend a night with **FERNANDO JONES & MY BAND.**

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A comfortable lavender and stainless-steel paradise deep in the heart of the meat district. On Sept. 16: a seminar in punk jazz, with **LUNAR CRUSH, RISE ROBOTS RISE,** and **LOST TRIBE.** Every Monday in September, local heavyweights **DANNY BLUME** and **BEN PEROWSKY** curate a free evening of noise and art. On Sept. 19: **ASSHOLE SAVANT.**

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. The fabulous **LADY BUNNY** is your hostess every Tuesday night.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. On Sept. 16: **MIRACLE LEGION,** a band whose hummable tunes and jangly guitar riffs sparked a big buzz a few years back. The group has yet to match the commercial success of other young roots-popsters like Soul Asylum and Counting Crows, but Legion is still well worth checking out. On Sept. 20: **JULIA FORDHAM.** The **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. The AM-radio-weaned pop band **LOTION** is here on Sept. 16, with **SOMETHING HAPPENS.** Smackmelon will also perform. On Sept. 17, the **HATTERS** swing by, with guests the Other Half. On Sept. 20: two-time Woodstock veteran **JOE COCKER** rocks the house. On Sept. 21: alternative-rock curiosities **WEEN** and **ECHOBELLY** appear. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. On Sept. 18: a cheerful bill, featuring **NAPALM DEATH** and **OBITUARY.** Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—An unassuming basement restaurant-bar, where you can drink cheap and catch live music nightly. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side Blues. The ubiquitous **BO DIDDLEY, JR.,** performs on Sept. 14. On Sept. 17: the **FINS.**

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **ECHOBELLY** appears on Sept. 17, with Wake Ooloo. On Sept. 18, don't miss alternative-rock comers **STEREOLAB.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Downtown's newest little club that could. Beyond the long bar, you'll find a dimly lit room with a stage that's been playing host to some hip rock acts. On Sept. 14: **GO TO BLAZES.** On Sept. 15: big-time knob twirler **MITCHELL FROOM** and ex-Del Fuego **DAN ZANES** continue their local organ-and-guitar assault. On Sept. 17: **VELVET CRUSH.**

Nell's, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to throbbing funk and techno-pop.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

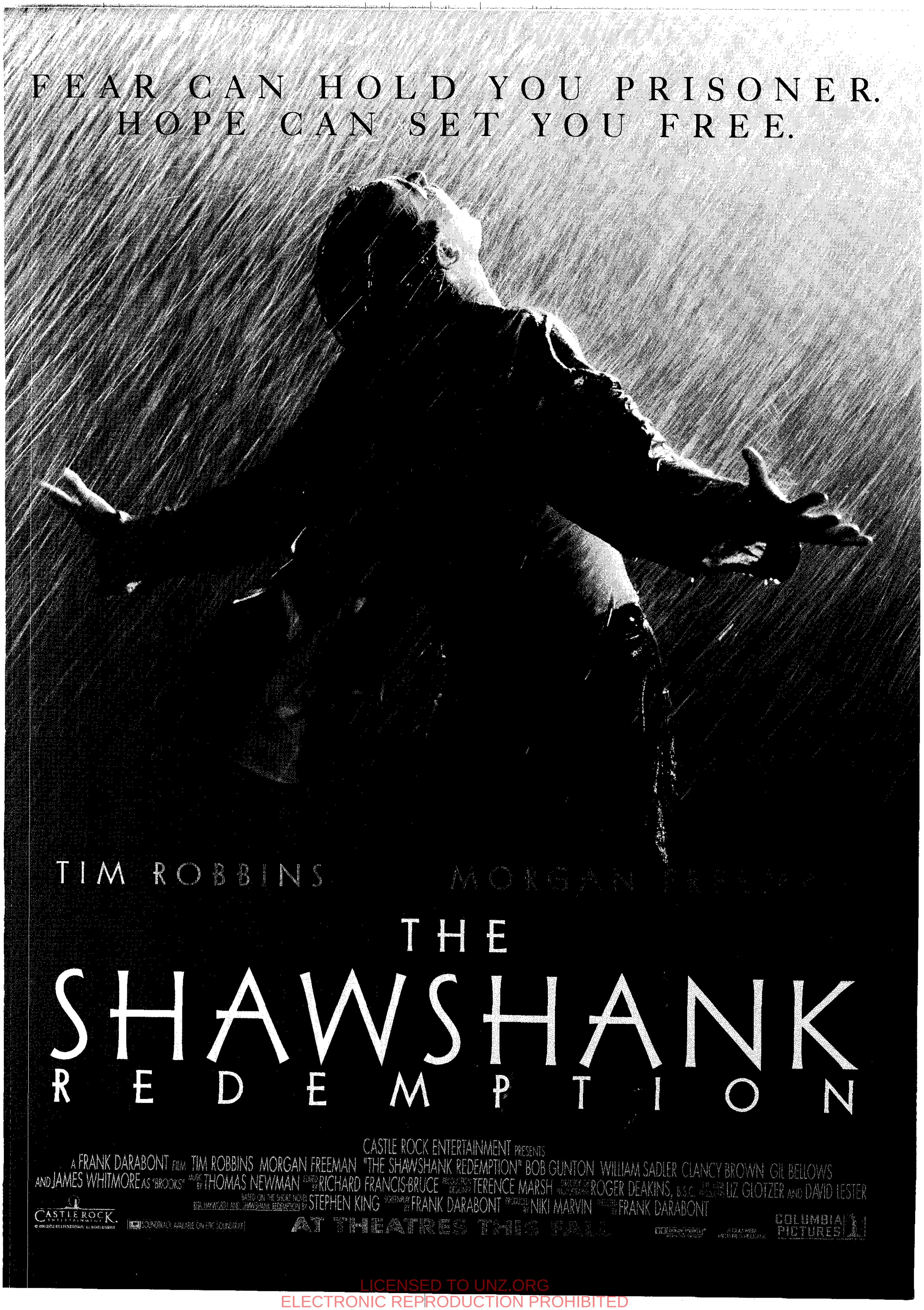
Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and the occasional cha-cha. On Sept. 16: **RAY SEPULVEDA** takes the stage, followed by **EDWIN RIVERA,** on Sept. 17. Dining.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. Venezuelan salsa star **OSCAR D'LEON** drops in on Sept. 19. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—On Sept. 18: opera star **DAWN UPSHAW** serves up a platter of show tunes. Thursday nights belong to **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—This broad, spacious, and agreeable club offers a consis-

ROBERT DEMICHIELL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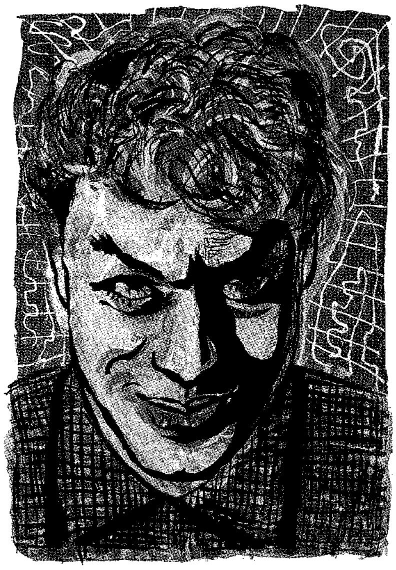
NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

tent lineup of blues greats. **DAVE EDMUNDS** is here on Sept. 15. Since launching his career with the 1970 single "I Hear You Knocking," this singer/songwriter/guitarist/producer has enjoyed an eclectic career, forming the way cool (if short-lived) band Rockpile with Nick Lowe in the late seventies and later working with artists ranging from Ringo Starr to k. d. lang. On his delightful new album, "Plugged In," Edmunds continues to flaunt his all-American, pre-Beatles influences, and to rock out with vigor and panache. With Carnival Strippers. On Sept. 16, check out **YO LA TENGO**, with **STEREOLAB**. On Sept. 17, hail, hail **CHUCK BERRY**. The still great rock pilgrim will be joined by guest **MARCIA BALL**. On Sept. 20: **CHEAP TRICK** arrives. Monday nights, Tramps presents Soul Kitchen, an evening of seventies R. & B. for devotees of Don Cornelius.



Danny Elfman, of Boingo, at the Academy.

GARY PANTER

WEBSTER HALL, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A warehouse complex for neo-hippies and other party animals. **XANAX 25** plays on Sept. 16, with Cycomotogoat. On Sept. 18, beware **YUPPICIDE**.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **BOBBY CADWELL** begins a two-week run on Sept. 20. Dining.

ARTHUR'S TAVERN, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, weekends to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that also features a tapas bar—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. Tuesdays through Saturdays, actress/singer/comedienne **TOVAH FELDSHUH** has the stage.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—An airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery. On Sept. 16-17: the **MASUO QUINTET**, a combo from Japan. **MARTHA LORIN** fronts a trio on Sept. 19. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. **STÉPHANE GRAPPELLI** finishes a two-night run on Sept. 14. Grappelli, the grand old man of the jazz violin, is not to be missed. He may never escape his fabled association with Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt, but for his own part, Grappelli pushed past Hot Club of France nostalgia long ago. He loves tearing through standards and coating ballads in full Gallic charm. For this gig, his trio will include the sympathetic guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli, another musician who gets more impressive with age. On Sept. 15-18: **TOOTS THIELEMANS**. The world's foremost jazz-harmonica player, Thielemans is one of the most lyrical and harmonically astute musicians around. His ballads are heartbreaking, and his bop forays regularly astonish. The **MAX ROACH DOUBLE QUARTET** begins an engagement on Sept. 20. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here. Through Sept. 17: **DADO MORONI**, **YORON ISRAEL**, and **IRA COLEMAN**. Recently a Bradley's staple, Moroni speaks the universal language of bop with a New York accent. His righteous rhythm section includes two young mainstays on the scene: bassist Coleman and drummer Israel. On Sept. 18, catch **PETER BERNSTEIN**, **BRAD MEHLDAU**, and **UGONNA OKEGWO**. Guitarist Bernstein, who usually plays with the masterful saxophonist Lou Donaldson, never strains the funk out of his aggressive bop runs. His distinction, in fact, lies in his residual grit. **JOHN HICKS** and **PETER WASHINGTON** start on Sept. 19, with **CRAIG HANDY**. With their like-minded attitude toward hard-bop values, pianist Hicks and bassist Washington make quite the team. Joined later in the week by the superlative saxophonist Handy (a recent fellow at drummer Roy Haynes' finishing school), the trio acquires a near-classic sheen.

CAJUN, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band, Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The indomitable soprano **BARBARA COOK** takes command of this urbane dinner-and-music room for a month beginning on Sept. 20, backed up by her longtime pianist and arranger **WALLY HARPER**. Her voice remains almost defiantly that of the nineteen-fifties Broadway *ingénue*. She and Mel Tormé (currently singing at Michael's Pub) could go on tour as the Mr. and Mrs. Ponce de León of the club circuit. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **KURT WIETING** presides at the piano through Sept. 17. The dapper, easygoing cabaret singer **RONNY WHYTE** begins on Sept. 20.

EIGHTY EIGHT'S, 228 W. 10th St. (924-0088)—On Sept 14-20: comic actress **JULIE HALSTON** offers an evening of opinions and observations.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—One of the city's top jazz spots. The **LYNN ARRIALE** trio continues through Sept. 18. The pianist will be joined by vocalist **JUDY NIEMACK**. Beginning Sept. 20: the **SCOTT HAMILTON** quintet. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

FIFTY SEVEN FIFTY SEVEN, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist. Dining.

FIVE SPOT, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Set in a mammoth turn-of-the-century ballroom, this jazz club is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches, such as the zebra-patterned carpeting in the V.I.P. room upstairs. Pianist **ROY MERIWETHER** performs through Sept. 15, before heading down to Zinno. **IRENE REID** is here on Sept. 16-17. Dining.

IRIDIUM, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. Sept. 14-15: The **MYRON WALDEN** quartet, featuring **RYAN KISER**. On Sept. 16-17: **CRAIG**

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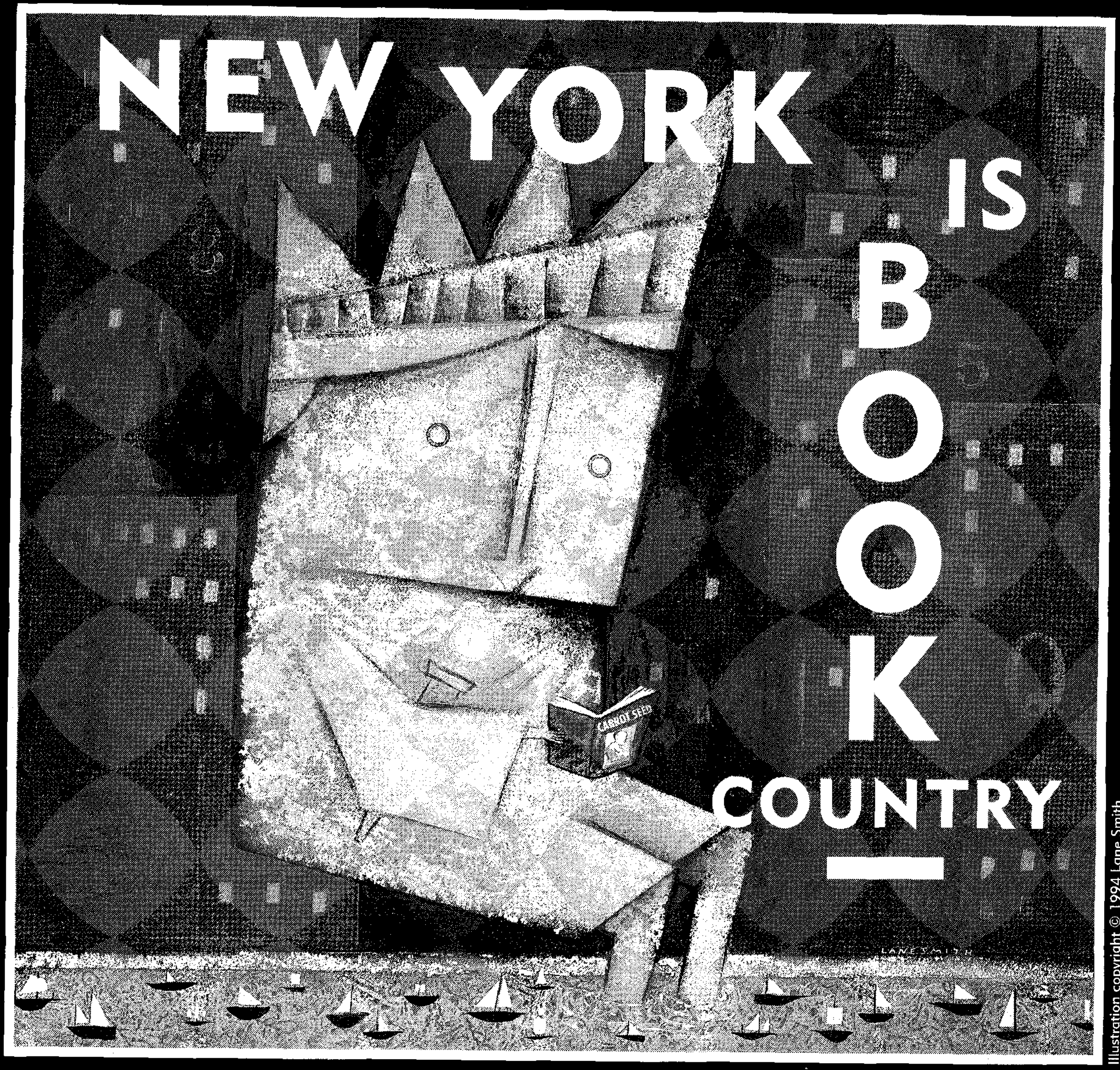

NEW YORK IS BOOK COUNTRY

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SEPTEMBER 18, 1994

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HANDY appears. Handy is among the best of the new tenor saxophonists who have begun loosening the stranglehold that Coltrane has exerted over their elders during the last thirty years. Handy knows how to luxuriate over a note, turning whole phrases into mini-rhapsodies. WES ANDERSON begins on Sept. 20.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. CYRUS CHESTNUT teams up with STEVE KIRBY on Sept. 14-17. On Sept. 18-20, pianist RENÉE ROSNES and bassist RON CARTER join forces.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This club, run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, specializes in all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. On Sept. 18: JOEY BARRON and DAVE DOUGLAS present an evening of slightly skewed standards. On Sept. 19-20: a trio featuring JOHN ZORN, DERICK BAILEY, and WILLIAM PARKER.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great GENE BERTONCINI lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Metropolis, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—The basement of this swank café is now hosting a series of high-profile gigs. Monday nights, catch CON-TRI-BUTION, a reggae-tinged jazz collective. Tuesdays are given over to the GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA, a seventeen-piece swing band. On Sept. 16-17: RAY BARRETTO & NEW WORLD SPIRIT.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA, a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. The rest of the week MEL TORMÉ holds forth. Tormé's voice—small, precise, immediately identifiable, in the way Tony Bennett's is—has stayed about the same, but the buzzing, in-your-ear style he started out with thirty years ago has long since given way to an affable, swinging, hornlike attack much admired by musicians and other singers. Beyond being a singer's singer, he has also become an entertainer's entertainer, and he keeps one's eyes hopping. A cheerful, hyperactive show.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY completes her engagement on Sept. 17. Callaway has an emotive, custardy alto, and, like Streisand, she knows when to trace a melody and when to let rip. Callaway also writes a great many of her own songs, which are a fine complement to the impressionistic covers of Gershwin and Mercer on her new CD, "Bring Back Romance." Cabaret deity and Anjelica Huston look-alike KAREN AKERS begins her run on Sept. 20. Closed Mondays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band and Phoebe Légère; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and the Kit McClure sextet; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th (929-7565)—A new contender in New York's ever-changing jazz topography, this aptly named club features young and up-and-coming players jamming late into the night. WALTER BISHOP, JR., is here on Sept. 16-17.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. The CEDAR WALTON trio plays through Sept. 18. A marvellous pianist, composer, and group leader, Walton makes consistently thoughtful, definitively swinging music with trios. The former Jazz Messenger's rapport with his longtime associate, drummer Billy Higgins, can be breathtakingly intimate. Starting Sept. 20: the MULGREW MILLER quintet.

Tatou, 151 E. 50th St. (753-1144)—The NAT JONES trio entertains every weekend. The rest of the week, a saucy cabaret revue called "Just for Kicks." Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. It resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings are impressive. Case in point: DOROTHY DONEGAN, whose trio will be here through Sept. 25. Now in her seventies, Donegan can still scare your pants off with her wild, free-association piano discourses. She'll try anything that's possible, and make the seemingly impossible work, interpolating classical themes into Tin Pan Alley warhorses, slinging off Tatum volleys, or romping through stride passages whenever the mood strikes her. It's on-the-edge stuff, fun and life affirming.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. RON CARTER holds court through Sept. 18. Among jazz bassists, Carter has come closest to household-name stature. There's a reason he's been on more than a thousand recordings; namely, his facility and taste, which are awe inspiring. Joining him will be pianist STEPHEN SCOTT and drummer LEWIS NASH, who are pretty spectacular themselves. The VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—The KENNY WERNER quintet entertains on Sept. 14-17. Pianist Werner has been following his own muse for years now. Whether playing with Joe Lovano or Mel Lewis, or recording with his own intuitive trio, Werner has distinguished himself with a percussive touch and a poetic bent.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—The food is Italian and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Through Sept. 17: a hot trio featuring SONNY FORTUNE (sax), RONNIE MATHEWS (piano), and PETER WASHINGTON (bass). On Sept. 19: pianist ROY MERIWETHER begins a one-week engagement.

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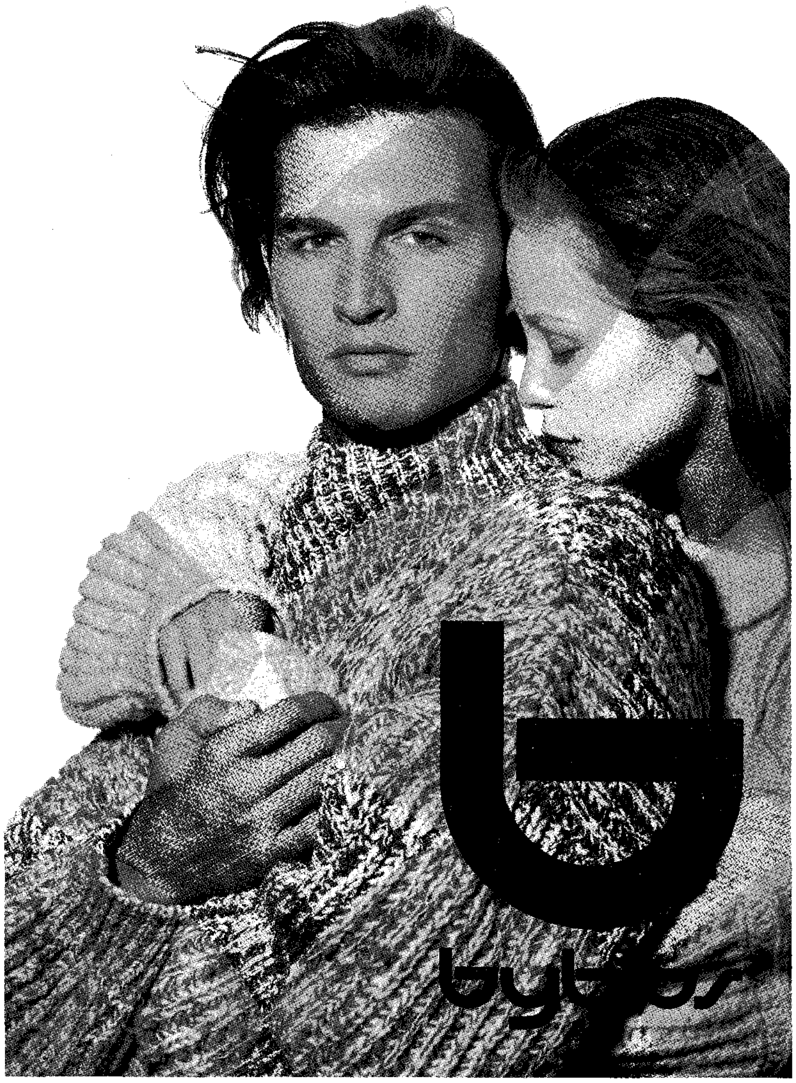

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ART

From Bad to Good

THE seventies saw the brief flowering of a micromovement known as "bad" painting, after a show curated by Marcia Tucker at the New Museum. Its name was an obvious provocation. After all, what constitutes bad painting, really? Technical ineptitude, banal ideas, blatant anachronism? Or, under the aegis of camp, might a painting be so bad it's good? This month, the Andre Emmerich gallery provides an amusing study in contrasts, which touches on these questions. In the main gallery is a series by David Hockney titled "Some Even Newer Paintings (being gouache on paper)"; in the upstairs project space are small paintings by Andrew Masullo.

Hockney, the British émigré to the sun-dappled shores of Southern California, certainly isn't a bad painter; his new paintings, however, remind us that simple virtuosity is not enough. These abstractish landscape studies, with their perspectival suggestions of swollen protuberances and hollow recesses, enact a kind of parody of Hans Hofmann's "push-pull" principle for the composition of abstract paintings. It's really best to view Hockney's futile mastery in the light of Andrew Masullo's tiny, suffocated abstractions. Masullo's works seem to aspire to the generic and the bedraggled, like flea-market versions of abstract art. Stunted in scale and often featuring rebarbative colors and textures, they have a self-conscious weakness that becomes a selling point.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Gowns, daywear, and costume jewelry by Madame Grés, a French designer active from 1930 to 1988, are on display in the Costume Institute. . . . ¶ "Four Silk Kashan Rugs." In the sixteenth century, the Persian city of Kashan produced magnificent silk carpets, most likely for the royal palace. Only twenty of them have survived, four of which belong to the Met. Three are based on traditional medallion designs; one depicts fierce tigers and fantastic animals attacking cattle and deer. Displayed together for the first time, the four rugs provide a rare glimpse into a vanished world of imperial splendor. . . . ¶ "Dali: The Early Years." It is fashionable to dismiss the Spanish Surrealist Salvador Dali (1904-89) as a purveyor of schlock, yet his brilliant, visionary early works are as original and influential as any produced by Surrealism. The show includes a video installation of scenes from "Un Chien Andalou," Dali's historic collaboration with Buñuel. Through Sept. 18. . . . ¶ The Annenberg collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works includes paintings by Picasso and Renoir. . . . ¶ Masterpieces from the museum's furniture collection, including a Mies van der Rohe tubular-steel armchair. Through Oct. 9. . . . ¶ "Divine Protection: Batak Art of North Sumatra." Seventy primarily wooden works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ranging from a three-inch-square ritual book to puppets. . . . ¶ The roof garden, complete with sculptures, is open through the end of October. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"The Prints of Louise Bourgeois." . . . ¶ An exhibit of movie stills, from films ranging from "Intolerance" (1916) to "Danton" (1983). Through Oct. 11. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—While the Goog is between shows, busy hands will be taking down "The Tradition of the New: Post-War Masterpieces from the Guggenheim Collection," to make room for "The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-68," which will open Oct. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, from 10 to 6, except Sept. 14 and Sept. 16, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky." Opens Sept. 14. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Neil Jenney: Natural Rationalism." Opens Sept. 16. . . . ¶ A retrospective of more than two hundred paintings and works on paper by Joseph Stella (1877-1946), the American Futurist. Through Oct. 9. (A complementary show is at the Kraushaar gallery.) . . . ¶ "From the Collection: Photography, Sculpture, and Paintings" includes work by Nan Goldin, Sally Mann, Agnes Martin, and Ad Reinhardt. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Empires Beyond the Great Wall: The Heritage of Genghis Khan." Opens Sept. 16. . . . ¶ "Royal Tombs of Sipán." Gold, silver, and gilded copper objects of the Moche, a pre-Inca civilization of northern Peru. The 1987 discovery of a series of undisturbed royal tombs dating to the fourth century A.D. established the Moche as one of the world's major ancient civilizations. Precious metals steal the show, though the ceramics on display are very fine, and Moche portrait heads speak as eloquently as Roman busts. The curators are probably right to identify Sipán as the richest burial site ever excavated in the New World. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—Selected works of Leon Polk Smith, an American abstract painter. . . . ¶ From the museum's contemporary-art collection, an exhibit of paintings by Mark Rothko and Ad Reinhardt, and sculpture by Louise Nevelson, among others. . . . ¶ An exhibition of more than five hundred Egyptian objects from the museum's extensive collection, spanning thirteen hundred years of Pharaonic history. . . . ¶ From the museum's collection, samples of twentieth-century decorative arts and industrial design, including studio pottery and an Electrolux vacuum cleaner. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Bauhaus Workshops: 1919-1933." Furniture, metalwork, glass, textiles, and ceramics made by disciples of the German school of architecture and design. This small but instructive exhibit broadens the picture to include the role of women at the Bauhaus. Among the highlights are the innovative textile designs of Gunta Stölzl, Anni Albers, and others, which combine a rich craft aesthetic with the abstract concepts of the modernist utopia. Through Oct. 9. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

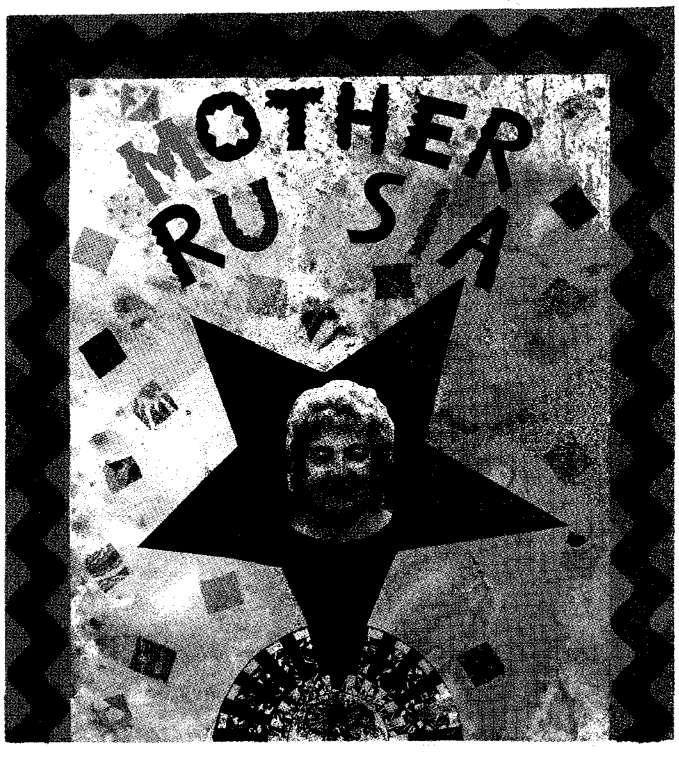
Bard Graduate Center, 18 W. 86th St.—"Baroque Splendor: The Art of the Hungarian Goldsmith" includes gilt silver vessels, jewels, and armor from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, when Hungary was occupied by the Turks. (Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8:30.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"The Structure of Style: Modernism in Dutch Applied Arts 1880-1930." . . . ¶ "Angles of Repose: A Garden Exhibition of Central Park Benches." A selection of benches from the Park, dating back to 1858. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

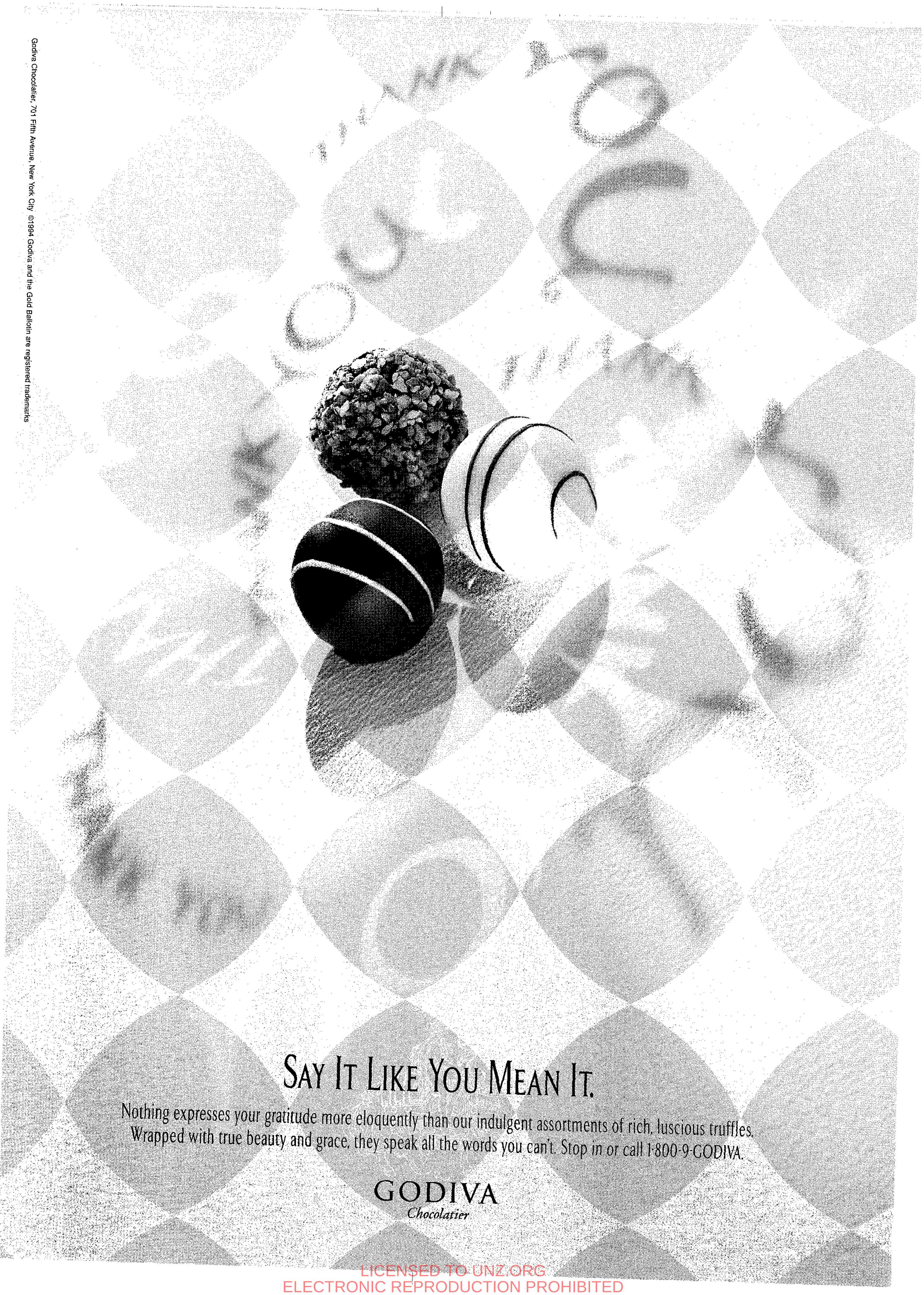
Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St.—"Andy Warhol: The Last Supper Paintings." Opens Sept. 16. . . . ¶ Irish artist James Coleman's "Projected Images, 1972-94." Opens Sept. 16. . . . ¶ Work by Dan Graham. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.) . . . ¶ At 393 West Broadway—Walter De Maria's "The Broken Kilometer." Reopens Sept. 14. . . . ¶ At 141 Wooster St.—De Maria's "The New York Earth Room." Reopens Sept. 14. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—Sèvres porcelain, Limoges enamel, and paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Whistler, and El Greco are all on view in this former residence of Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919). (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St.—"Double Realities," photographs by Miyase Ceren. Opens Sept. 16. (Open Tuesdays and Thursdays, noon to 7; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 5.)



Self-portrait by Miriam Schapiro (Steinbaum Krauss).



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ART–Cont'd

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—" 'A Chief of Ideas': Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century" highlights his longtime love affairs with Mme. du Châtelet and his niece Mme. Denis. . . . ¶ " 'No Small Pleasure': Benjamin Franklin as Public Servant." (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—The second part of the series "Artists Talk Back: Visual Conversations with El Museo" is titled "Recovering Popular Culture." The show's four sections include a bodega exhibit, demonstrations by weavers and instrument makers, an exhibit pairing work from the permanent collection with that of contemporary artists, and pieces from the traditional arts collection. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, noon to 7.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Western Artists/African Art." It's difficult to study the masks and statuary in this exhibit of African objects owned by Western artists without considering a number of issues, such as how artists are influenced by other cultures, and what it means to own work that was intended strictly for religious ceremonies. These pieces, owned by such artists as Francesco Clemente, Eric Fischl, and Lorna Simpson, have been photographed in their owners' homes and are shown with texts of their owners' thoughts. The sculptor Mel Edwards says, "Eye to eye, African art is like a deep conversation with family." The show, too, is a provocative discussion. Through Sept. 25. . . . ¶ "Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale." Paintings, sculptures, and drawings by Mor Faye and Moustapha Dimé, of Senegal, and Tamessir Dia, Ouattara, and Gérard Santoni, of the Ivory Coast, all of whom were in the 1993 Venice Biennale. Through Sept. 18. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Every Picture Tells a Story: Word and Image in American Folk Art." Opens Sept. 17. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Stickball Hall of Fame" includes a film of a stickball game, photographs from 1898 to the present, and jerseys. Through Sept. 25. . . . ¶ "Pride=Power!" marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion, in which patrons of a gay bar resisted arrest and harassment, triggering a series of riots and demonstrations. The exhibit includes photographs of the New York City Gay and Lesbian Pride March, posters, pennants, T-shirts, and other artifacts. Through Sept. 18. . . . ¶ "Modern Metropolis" includes more than two dozen vintage prints of New York, from the early part of this century. Through Oct. 18. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Glancing Backward: Edith Wharton's New York." Paintings, drawings, sculpture, and books that detail the literary career of Edith Wharton. . . . ¶ Thirty-two Old Master drawings, by, among others, Claude Lorrain and Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo. Through Sept. 25. . . . ¶ "The Artist's Eye: Wayne Thiebaud." The painter has selected more than fifty paintings from the Academy's collection. Fifteen of Thiebaud's own pictures are also on exhibit. Through Sept. 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Raw and the Cooked: Images of Food from the Renaissance to the Present." . . . ¶ "Broken Rules and Double Crosses: Ken Campbell, an Artist's Books." . . . ¶ "Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall." Photos, posters, and related material place the Stonewall rebellion in the larger context of gay history. Through Sept. 24. . . . ¶ "New in the Berg Collection, 1991-1993." Manuscripts that the library acquired during this period include Nabokov's papers and several poems by Anne Sexton. Through Oct. 1. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"New Performance in Found Spaces: Documentary Photographs by Tom Brazil and Dona Ann McAdams." Opens Sept. 16. . . . ¶ "Revealing Roots: Uncovering Influences on the Contemporary American Puppet Theatre." Six stunning exhibits show how the puppetry traditions of Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, and Western Africa, among other places, have infused American puppet artistry with their mythos and technique. Through Sept. 30. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Rd., Long Island City—Works from every period of the Japanese-American sculptor's life (1904-88) are installed in a garden and open-air galleries carved from, and added to, an old photoengraving factory. (Open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Socrates Sculpture Park, Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City—"Bongo Park '94" includes work by Gunilla Bandolin, Mark di Suvero, and Nancy Rubins. (Open daily, 10 to sunset.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Hale Woodruff Memorial Exhibition–Curators' Choice." The third in a series, in which the work of little-known African-American artists is selected for exhibition by curators from around the United States. . . . ¶ Minimalist bronze sculptures by Helen Evans Ramsaran. Through Oct. 2. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(*Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)*

Peter Alexander—Paintings of sunsets, airports, Los Angeles fires, and Las Vegas at night, in which this Southern California artist explores the effects of light. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 22. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St.)

Curtis Anderson / Not Vital—Paintings done in silver leaf. / Two large sculptures. Opens Sept. 16. Through Oct. 22. (Baron-Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St.)

Georg Baselitz—Works on paper, from the sixties, by this German Neo-Expressionist. Opens Sept. 14. Through Nov. 5. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

Lorenzo Cardi—Paintings of Expressionistic nudes in enigmatic settings, by a young Italian artist. Opens Sept. 14. Through Oct. 22. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Manny Farber—Still-lifes, of produce from the artist's garden in San Diego, that include references to his everyday life. Opens Sept. 16. Through Oct. 15. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Chuck Forsman—Paintings of Western dams and reservoirs. Opens Sept. 15. Through Oct. 15. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Keith Haring (1958-90)—"The Life of Christ," a massive three-panel bronze that was the artist's last sculptural work. It will be permanently housed in the cathedral's Chapel of St. Saviour. Opens Sept. 19. Through Oct. 16. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Daily, 10 to 4.)

Donald Judd / Jim Dine—Recent plywood and Plexiglas wall pieces, Corten-steel slabs stacked on the floor, and a multi-unit aluminum floor piece / Works on paper of plants and flowers, from the seventies to the present. Opens Sept. 16. Through Oct. 15. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

Robert M. Kulicke—Replicas of antique frames that enclose mirrors. Opens Sept. 19. Through Oct. 15. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

Three Brits—Abstract oils by Thérèse Oulton, allegorical figurative paintings by Steven Campbell, and paintings with symbolist imagery by Christopher LeBrun. Opens Sept. 14. Through Oct. 8. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Tribute—An overview of the twenty-seven-year history of the Martha Jackson Gallery, including paintings and works on paper by Sam Francis, Paul Jenkins, Arshile Gorky, and others whose work has been shown at the gallery. Opens Sept. 15. Through Oct. 22. (Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St.)

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Alan Bray—Intimately scaled landscapes composed of meticulous hairline strokes of color. Through Oct. 8. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Francesco Clemente / Andrew Lord—"Purgatorio," a new series consisting of five paintings and four pastels. / Bronzes in the form of vessels. Through Oct. 15. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Al Held—Dark, heavily impastoed abstract paintings with linear elements, done in Paris in 1952. Through Oct. 8. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

David Hockney / Andrew Masullo—Gouaches, in the artist's continuing exploration of perspective and the illusion of depth. / Small-scale abstractions. Through Oct. 15. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

John Hull—Narrative paintings about the battle of the Alamo. Through Oct. 12. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Mark Mennin—Sculptural stone fragments depicting the sensory organs of humans, set in frames made by the artist. Through Oct. 15. (Marisa Del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Gabriel Orozco—An inflated-inner-tube piece, an installation made of wooden ice-cream spoons, and a small heart-shaped sculpture. Through Oct. 15. (Goodman, 24 W. 57th St.)

Katherine Palvis Porter / Jedd Novatt—Large-scale paintings of the sky, stars, and labyrinths. / Welded and painted abstract sculptures. Through Oct. 1. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St.)

Jeanne Silverthorne—A chandelier cast in rubber is the centerpiece in this show of malleable sculptures of household objects. Through Oct. 1. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Joseph Stella (1877-1946)—"People on the Page," a selection from the artist's sketchbooks. Through Oct. 8. A retrospective of the artist's work is on view at the Whitney Museum. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

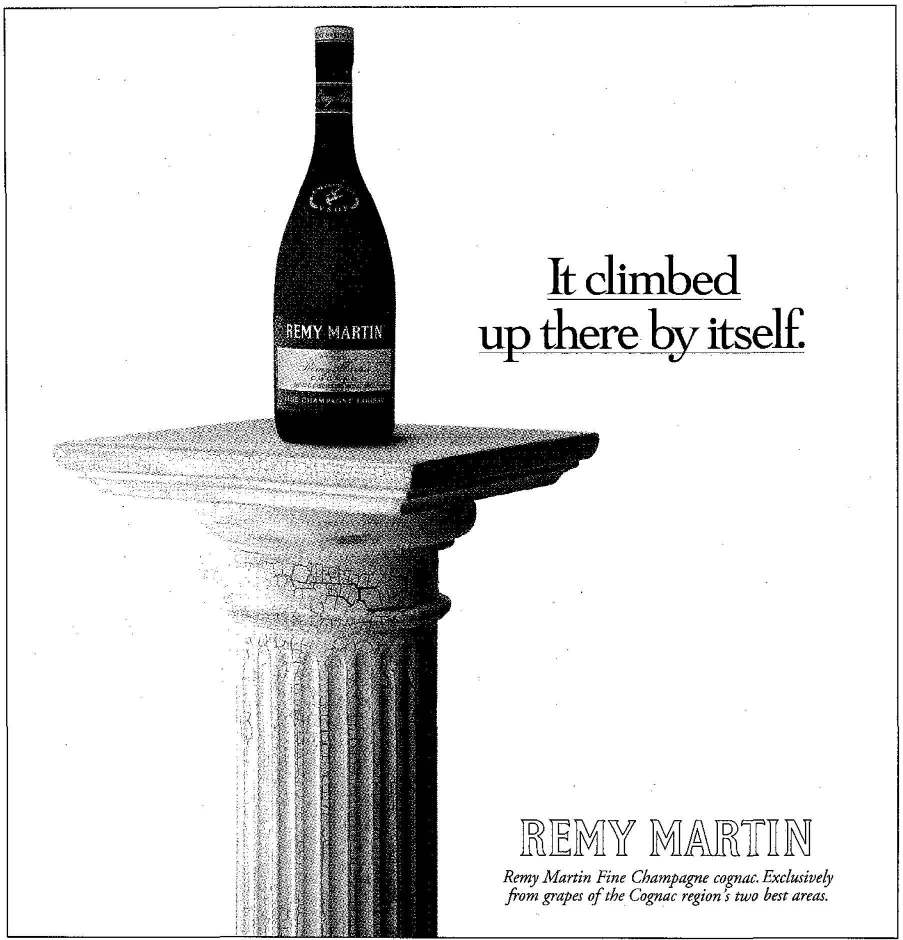
Walter Stuempfig (1914-70)—A retrospective exhibition of this Philadelphian loyalist to the realist cause in painting. Stuempfig's technique displays the felicities of solid academic training and traditional subject matter. Through Oct. 8. (York, 21 E. 65th St.)

"The Art of Taiwan's Aborigines"—Handicrafts made by the ten major aboriginal tribes of the island of Taiwan. Through Oct. 21. (Taipei, 1221 Sixth Ave., at 49th St. Open Mondays. Closed Saturdays.)

"The Body Human"—Views of the human figure, by Keith Haring, Tom Otterness, and others. Through Oct. 15. (Haime, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"By Their Choice?"—Works by four African-American artists who left the country during the fifties to live and paint in Europe. Through Oct. 1. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

Three Weimar Era Women—The best known of this trio is Käthe Kollwitz, whose lugubrious proletarian woodcuts depict the poverty and suffering of women and children. In Jeanne Mammen's watercolors, by contrast, we enter a radically different social and spiritual world, one of pinched-face, painted, mannequinlike women.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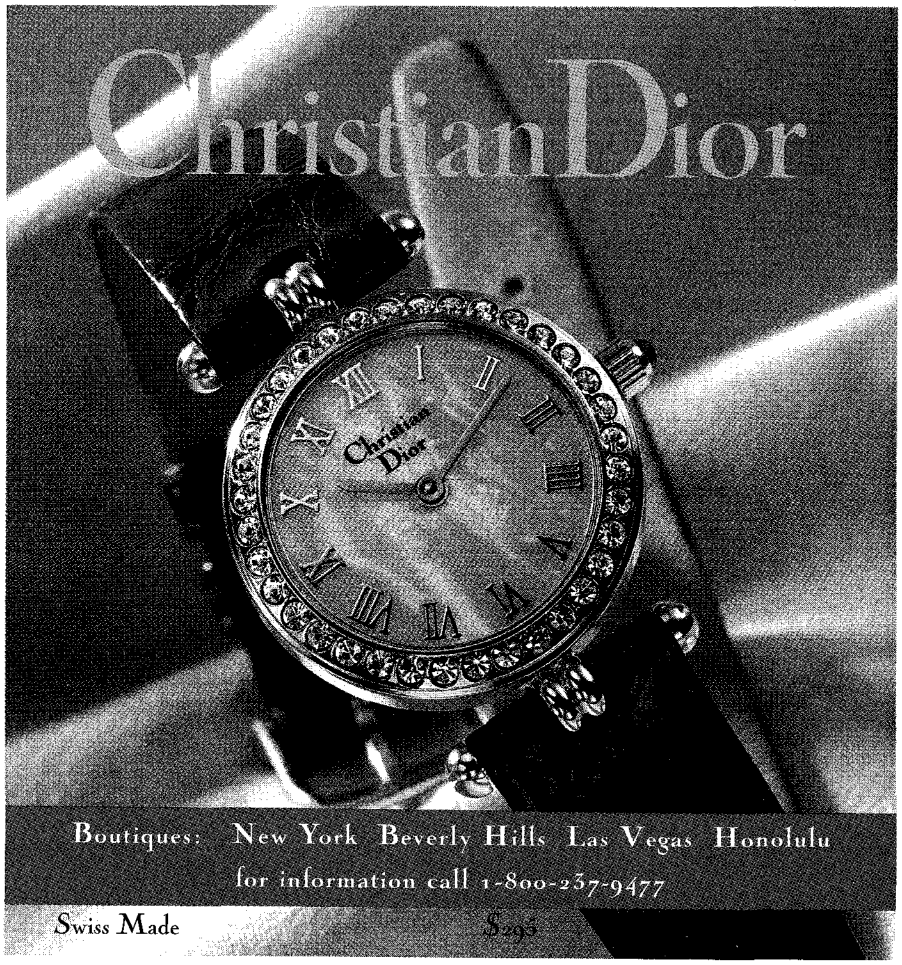
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Hannah Höch's collages, however, represent the cusp of the Dadaist avant-garde, and are as good as anything by Ernst or Schwitters. Her jittery, mechanized automata remain among the starkest emblems of the time. Through Nov. 5. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Wood Works"—A show of sculptures by both established and emerging artists. Saul Steinberg's "Perspective Table" (1974), on which the artist's whittled pencils, palette, and sketchbook are laid, has an affinity with Brooklyn-based András Böröcz's "Lounging" and "Couple" (both from this year), skinny totemic sculptures topped with figures, all made of pencils. Other artists in the show include Louise Nevelson, Richard Artschwager, and Claudia Fitch. Through Oct. 21. (Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

"The Bridge Show"—The inaugural show at this new gallery is a refreshing selection of paintings by twenty-four young American and British artists. The Brits include Mark Wright, whose untitled work, an enormous, luminous lime-green abstract, has the illusion of depth, and Angela Gill, whose "Formulating, Fading" focusses on a Michelangelesque male and female nude. Among the contributions by Americans is Matthew Girson's "Fantasy," which at first appears to be a wintry Christmas-card scene but turns out to depict a German concentration camp. Opens Sept. 16. Through Nov. 16. (Lannon, 530 W. 22nd St. Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

William Blayney (1917-86)—Paintings on Biblical themes, by a minister. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 18. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

John Chamberlain—Eleven new painted-steel sculptures made from van tops. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 15. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Clyde Hopkins—Abstract paintings in bold colors. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 15. (Prats, 568 Broadway.)

David Lasry—Lustrous black-and-white paintings built up with many layers of paint and featuring hard-edged rectangles. Opens Sept. 16. Through Oct. 15. (Auchincloss, 558 Broadway.)

Richard Meier—Sculptures. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 8. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Luigi Ontani—Allegorical photographic self-portraits, from the seventies and the present, by a young Italian. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 22. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Lari Pittman—Idiosyncratic paintings with complex overlays of images and words. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 29. (Gorney Modern, 100 Greene St.)

Rosemarie Trockel—An installation of sculptures referring to the artist's personal art history, plus a video. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 15. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Jenny Watson—Paintings of figures set on damask and velvet. Opens Sept. 20. Through Oct. 11. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Michele Zalopany—Landscapes. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 15. (65 Thompson Street Gallery.)

"Beyond Bard"—Works on paper by a hundred *alumni of Bard College, among them* Richard Pousette-Dart and Mimi Gross. Opens Sept. 19. Through Oct. 2. (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. Daily, 2 to 7.)

Cartoons—More than two hundred graphics by artists of this magazine, ranging from its early days to the present. Opens Sept. 14. Through Nov. 12. (Heineman, 594 Broadway.)

"Let the Artist Live!"—An experimental exhibition of habitat installations. Fifteen artists from the United States and abroad will each be given an area in the gallery in which to live and work, engaging the public in the process. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 22. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway. Open Tuesdays through Thursdays until 8, and Fridays and Saturdays until 10.)

REBECCA GIBBON

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Matthew Abbott—Brightly colored paintings, each of which incorporates a nearly illegible crossword puzzle from the London *Times*. The paintings' titles are answers found in the puzzles. Through Oct. 12. (Fawbush, 76 Grand St.)

Doug Aitken—An installation consisting of digitally created photographic images, a sound piece, and two videos, in which the artist has juxtaposed media images with personal narrative elements. Through Oct. 15. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Kelynn Alder—Paintings and sketches of the Lacandones of Naja—an indigenous people of Southern Mexico who uphold the ancient customs of the Maya religion—*plus five mythological sculptures.* Through Oct. 13. (A, 98 Greene St.) . . . ¶ A complementary exhibition of works by Lacandon children is at the Children's Museum of the Arts, 72 Spring St. Through Feb. 28.

Peter Brown / Govert Heikoop—Sculptures by two artists working with laminated and colored wood in simple biomorphic shapes. Through Oct. 1. (M-13, at 72 Greene St.)

Howard Buchwald—Richly textured paintings dating from 1989, when the artist ceased cutting into the canvas, to the present. Through Oct. 5. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Ann Chodash—Abstract paintings in primary colors, combining geometric and lyrical elements. Through Oct. 1. (Bibro, 584 Broadway.)

Adam Cvijanovic—Two monumental paintings focussing on the importance of the hand in production: the first depicts Russian workers in a sweatshop where shearling coats are made, and the second portrays Chuck Close, who was partially handicapped several years ago, surrounded by assistants and dealers in his studio. Through Oct. 15. (Anderson, 476 Broome St.)

Lloyd Gunther Dallet / Jackie Moore Watson—Wooden panels based on antique botanical prints. / Spanish landscape paintings. Through Sept. 20. (Roy, 46 Greene St. Closed Mondays.)

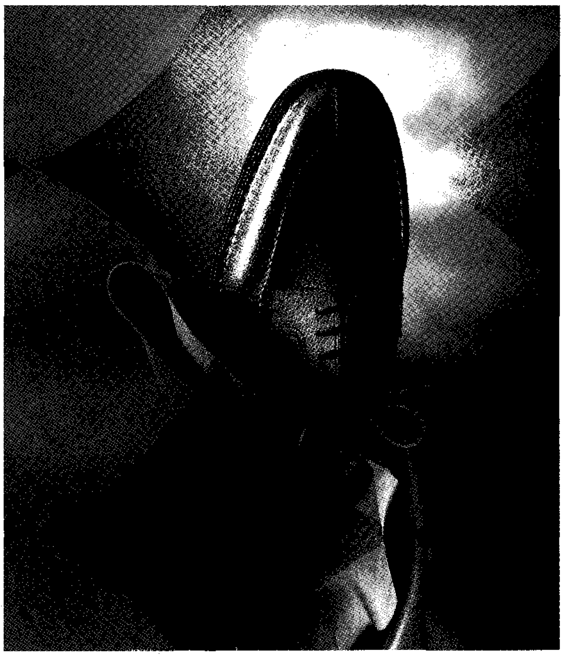
Alfred DeCredico / Paola Fonticoli—Abstract drawings. / Black-and-white works on paper, evocative of nature. Through Oct. 1. (Condeso-Lawler, 524 Broadway.)

Willie Doherty—A video installation about a man's fantasies of being both a victim and an assassin. Through Oct. 22. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. Open Wednesday evenings until 8:30.)

Helmut Dorner—Single- and multi-panel paintings built up with layers of lacquer. Through Oct. 8. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Eric Fischl—A series of five paintings of scenes involving a nude woman. Through Oct. 22. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Dale Frank—Brightly colored abstractions composed of fluid loops of paint. Through Oct. 1. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)



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Nancy Grossman—"Fire Fields," a series of abstract collage drawings based on the artist's recent observation of the active volcanoes in Hawaii. Through Oct. 15. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)

Laurel Katz—A mixed-medium project that proposes bypassing the shearing of sheep by growing sweaters directly on the animals. Through Oct. 8. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

Harriet Korman—Luminous abstract paintings. Through Oct. 8. (Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway.)

Elaine Marinoff—Thickly textured, dark abstract paintings based on the artist's research at oil-spill sites, and drawings based on her response to the California fires last October. Through Oct. 1. (Zarre, 48 Greene St.)

Sarah Plimpton—Abstract paintings by a poet. Through Oct. 4. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

David Robbins—A show of sculptures and photographs in a series called "Situation Comedies." Through Oct. 15. (Feature, 76 Greene St.)

Miriam Schapiro—Paintings incorporating pieces of fabric from the artist's "Collaboration Series 1994: Mother Russia." In this show, Schapiro's "collaborators" are such women of the Soviet avant-garde as Varvara Stepanova, Lyubov Popova, and Natalya Goncharova. Schapiro is one of the original pattern-and-decoration artists of the seventies, and she remains true to the luxuriant craft aesthetic and implicitly feminist consciousness inherent in that movement. Through Oct. 15. (Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St.)

Judith Shea—A show ranging from the artist's 1979 cloth-form wall hangings to her current carved-wood and cast-steel pieces. Through Oct. 8. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.). . .¶ Shea's "The Other Monument," depicting an African-American rider on horseback—a counterpoint to the nearby statue of General William Tecumseh Sherman—is installed at the Doris C. Freedman Plaza, Fifth Ave. at 60th St.

Sandy Skoglund—Two years ago, at Borden, this enfant terrible showed three installations using mannequins and related photographs of real people, as well as smoked bacon strips, Cheez Doodles, and raisins: this magazine called them "scenes of funny horror." In her new piece, "The Wedding," the floors and ceiling are covered with strawberry jam and orange marmalade, and a pair of motorized mannequins play the bride and groom. Through Oct. 29. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

Edvins Strautmanis (1933-92)—Paintings from the last decade of this American abstractionist's career. Through Oct. 16. (Stephen Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St.)

Franz West—An installation titled "Home Elements (A Retrospective)," which includes sculpture, furniture, and works on paper and invites viewer interaction. Through Oct. 22. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St.)

Brenda Ziamany—Twelve portraits of male artists and twelve still-lifes of dead birds. Through Oct. 15. (Donahue, 560 Broadway.)

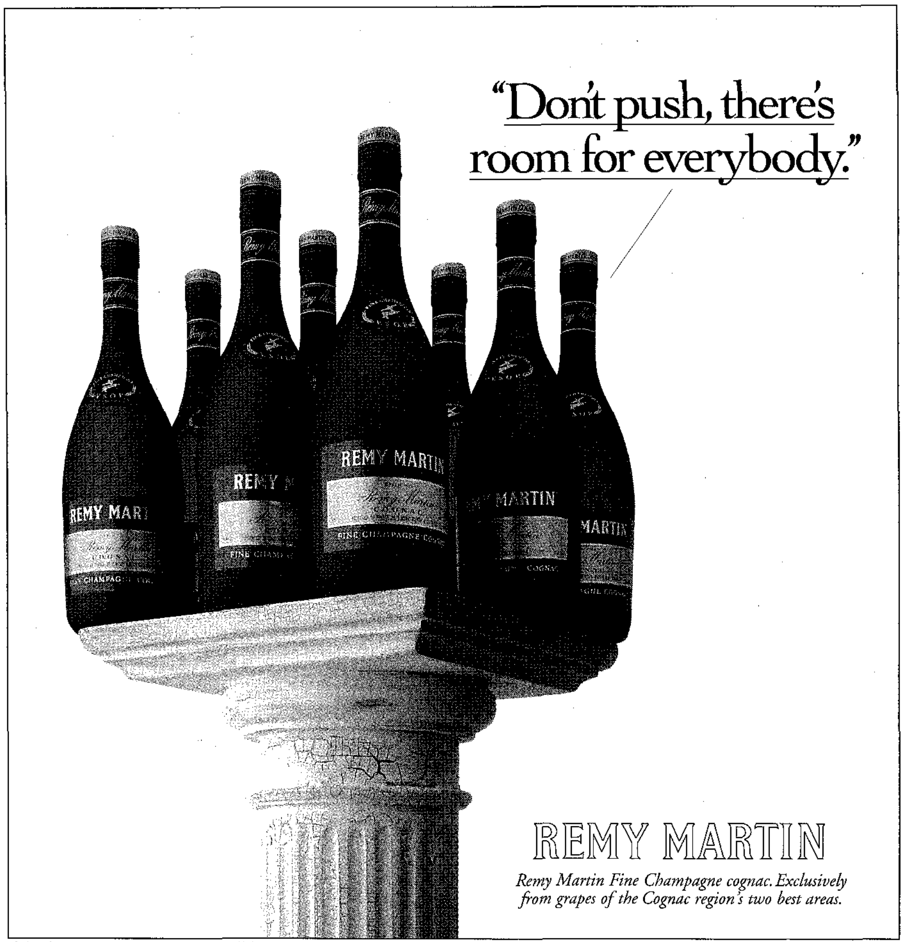
"Defining Color"—Eleven artists who focus on color, including Donald Judd, Byron Kim, and Ray Rapp. Through Oct. 8. (Tz'art, 28 Wooster St.)

"Family Ties"—Sculptures by six artists exploring issues of family and home. Through Oct. 8. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

"Selections Fall '94: Installations"—Four emerging artists explore ways in which the drawing medium can function in an installation format. Through Oct. 22. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

"Symbolic Surface"—David Geiser, Diane Green, Robert Kuszek, and six other painters. Through Oct. 7. (Klarfeld Perry, 472 Broome St.)

"Where Is Home?"—The gallery has assembled a group of works on the theme of homeland, community, and family, by, among others, John Baldessari, Annette Lemieux, and Joel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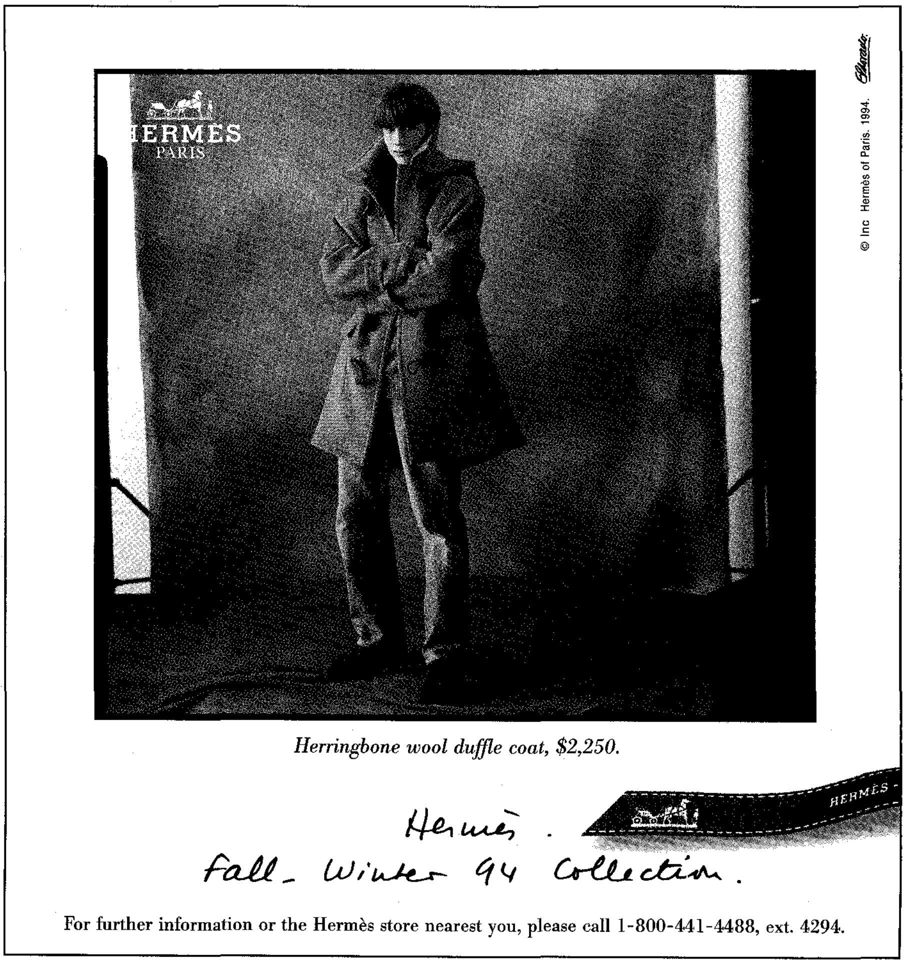
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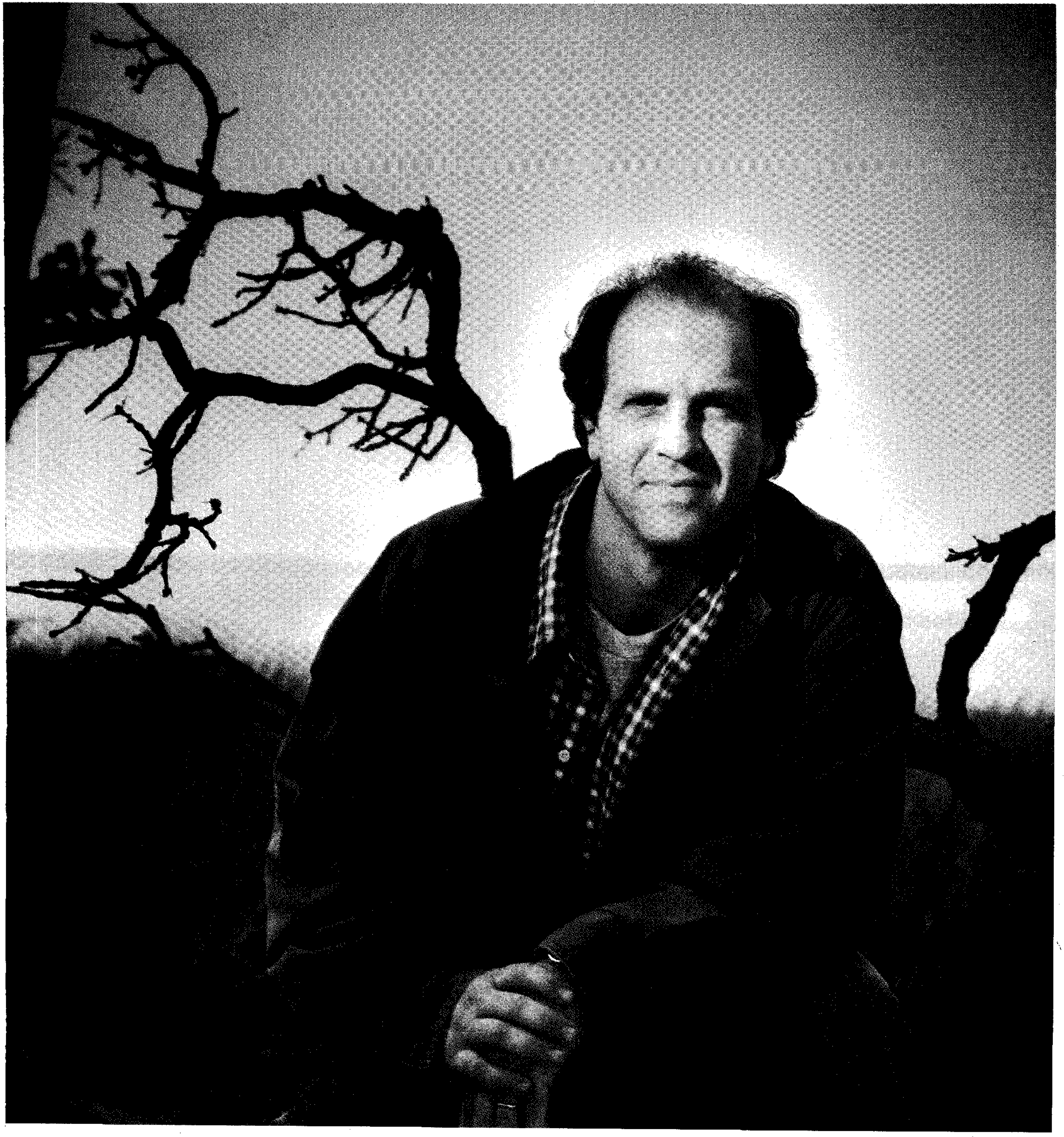

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ART—Cont'd

Sternfeld. Through Oct. 22. (Kent, 67 Prince St. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.)

ANTIQUES AND AUCTIONS

Belle Epoque—William Doyle Galleries kicks off its season with a sale of nineteenth- and twentieth-century decorative arts, including H. Claude Pissarro's painting "L'Arc de Triomphe" (estimate: $5,000-$7,000), a Tiffany lamp in a swirling yellow pattern on a green ground (estimate: $8,000-$12,000), and a KPM porcelain plaque depicting a child with two cats ($4,000-$6,000). (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Sept. 14 at 10 A.M.)

A Fair's Fare—The Autumn Antiques & Collectibles Fair is held in the pleasingly appropriate nineteenth-century setting of the Victorian Alice Austen House Museum & Garden, on Staten Island. Approximately sixty dealers from the Eastern Seaboard offer clocks, jewelry, linen and lace, dolls, baseball cards—you name it. (2 Hylan Blvd. Sept. 17-18 from 10 to 5. For information, call 1-718 816-4506.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Bill Brandt—A retrospective of the British photographer's work, including his early studies of English society and his later abstract female nudes. Through Oct. 29. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Regina De Luise—Rich exotic landscapes and nudes. Through Oct. 15. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

Andrea Gentl—Lyrical portraits and landscapes reminiscent of the work of Sally Mann. Through Nov. 6. (Rice, 325 W. 11th St.)

Leslie Gill (1908-58)—Images by a photographer best known for his work with *Harper's Bazaar.* Through Oct. 22. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

Pierre Jahan / Laure Albin-Guillot—Work from 1930-40, by two contemporaries of Man Ray and Cartier-Bresson. Opens Sept. 14. Through Oct. 15. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave. at 57th St.)

Maxwell MacKenzie—Panoramic, vividly colored landscapes of Otter Tail County, in northwest Minnesota. Through Oct. 8. (Saul, 560 Broadway.)

Janine Niepce—Black-and-white photographs of French country life, taken primarily in the fifties and sixties. Through Oct. 22. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

Patrick Nagatani—Color photographs of "constructed" environments. Through Oct. 15. (Baum, 588 Broadway.)

August Sander (1876-1964)—Sixty photographs of life during the Weimar Republic. Through Oct. 8. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Raghubir Singh—More than sixty photographs of Bombay and the Ganges river. Through Oct. 21. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St.)

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein (1910-83)—Obsessive, erotic photographs by an outsider artist from Milwaukee. Opens Sept. 17. Through Oct. 15. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

Georgi Zelma—Vintage images of Central Asia, by the Russian photographer. Through Oct. 29. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave. at 94th St.—A retrospective of the work of Cornell Capa, featuring images from *Life* and other magazines. Opens Sept. 14. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—Photographs by Lotte Jacobi. Through Sept. 16. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

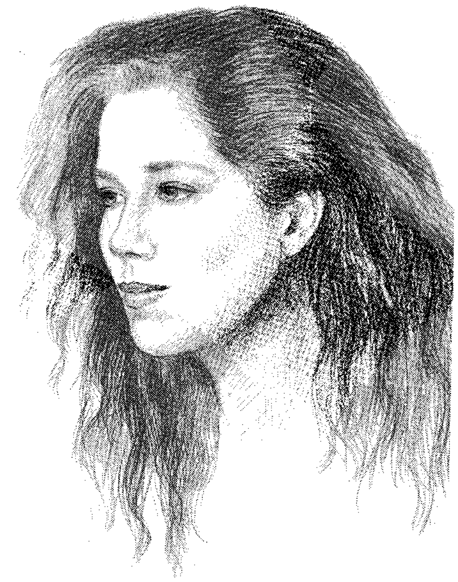
(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Goethe House, the Museum of the City of New York, the New York Public Library, and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Fringe Benefits

In the hierarchy of American opera fanatics, the most effete—and least generously served by the big houses—are partisans of "the French wing." This week, New York City Opera offers these fans their first *frisson* of the season by dusting off Léo Delibes's "Lakmé," an India-under-the-Raj tragedy, best known for Lily Pons' bare midriff, the "Bell Song," and—thanks to automobile and airline commercials—the duet-barcarole "Viens, Mallika/Dôme épais." "Lakmé" and the perennial "Carmen" will be City Opera's only bow to France this year. The Met will offer both less and more. Of the twenty-three operas it will present this season, only one is French; but it is Debussy's "Pelléas et Mélisande," the touchstone of French modernism, and it will be in a new production (opening in March) by the always enticing Jonathan Miller.

New York's opera Francophiles take their second-class status in stride, partly because they've learned to seek their real thrills off the beaten path. On September 25, the American Symphony Orchestra opens its season with concert performances of Bizet's "Djamileh" (a one-act comedy that preceded "Carmen" by three years) and highlights from Offenbach's "La Vie Parisienne." Opera Manhattan has scheduled an evening of Massenet excerpts in mid-October and, several weeks later, a staging of Dukas's "Ariane et Barbe-Bleu." The consistently laudable Opéra Français de New York will perform the Paris version of Gluck's "Orphée et Eurydice" (in concert, in January) and Offenbach's "Orphée aux Enfers" (semi-staged, in June). In December, the Manhattan School of Music will stage Chabrier's charming operetta "Une Education Manquée," and Juilliard will present, in April, Massenet's anguished "Werther." It adds up to a season of *réjouissance* for the French fringe.



Elizabeth Futral in "Lakmé."

THOMAS CURRY

OPERA

New York City Opera—**madama butterfly,** with Maryanne Telese, Ellen Rabiner, Stephen Mark Brown, and Robert Perry; conducted by Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 15 at 8.) . . . **tosca,** with Eva Zseller, Vincenzo Scuderi, and Harry Dworchak; Christopher Keene. (Sept. 16 at 8.) . . . **prince igor,** with Oksana Krovytska, Valery Alexeyev, and Vladimir Grishko; Mr. Ajmone-Marsan. (Sept. 17 at 1:30.) . . . **lakmé,** with Elizabeth Futral, Julia Anne Wolf, Richard Drews, Ron Baker, and Joseph Corteggiano; Scott Bergeson. (Sept. 17 at 8.) . . . **the magic flute,** sung in English, with Amy Burton, Mary Dunleavy, Benjamin Butterfield, Jeff Mattsey, and James Patterson; Mr. Bergeson. (Sept. 18 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. English supertitles at all non-English-language performances.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting "La Bohème." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Sept. 17 at 7:30 and Sept. 18 at 2:30.)

LISTENING BOOTH

The Beau Hunks Play the Original "Little Rascals" Music (Koch Screen). LeRoy Shield, born a hundred and one years ago in Waseca, Minnesota, started his musical career as an avant-garde concert pianist, championing the latest effusions of Ravel, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg, but he got sidetracked into the blossoming recording industry. With the advent of talkies, he signed on with the Hal Roach film studios, churning out reams of musical snippets that were assembled into tracks appropriate for whatever was happening on the screen—most notably, the antics of the Little Rascals and Laurel & Hardy. The scores are lost, but a gang of devoted Dutchmen has obsessively transcribed Shield's music from the soundtracks. (Obsessive? Wait till you see the scholarly detail of their program notes.) Here they bring their labor of love full circle by assembling a crackerjack orchestra of their countrymen to breathe swinging new life into these buoyant nineteen-thirties period pieces, in turn nostalgic, heartfelt, and unspeakably silly. You might buy two while you're at it—one for yourself, and one for a friend who needs to lighten up.

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge—Richard Marlowe directs a program that includes Britten's "Sacred and Profane," Bach's motet "Singet dem Herrn," and Poulenc's Mass in G, as well as works by Gesualdo, Lasso, and Reger (plus organ solos by Brahms and Reger). (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-4100. Sept. 15 at 8.)

Manhattan Chamber Sinfonia—Glen Cortese conducts Bruce Saylor's "Turns and Mordents" (featuring flutist Linda Chesis), Mozart's Symphony No. 41, and Copland's "Appalachian Spring." (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Sept. 16 at 8. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Wave Hill, 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. 1-718 549-3200. Sept. 18 at 3.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Oboist David Kossoff is featured in two concertos by Vivaldi, and Iris Regev moves to center stage as soloist in Sammartini's G-Major Cello Concerto. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Sept. 18 at 11:30 A.M.)

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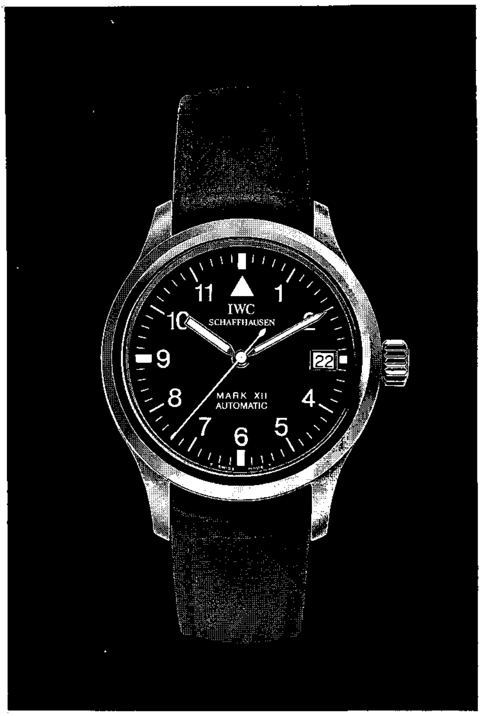

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RECITALS

Bargemusic—Presenting Mozart's E-Major Piano Trio (K. 542), Schumann's "Märchenbilder" (for viola and piano), and Chausson's A-Major Piano Quartet; with violinist Carmit Zori, violist Cynthia Phelps, cellist Ronald Thomas, and pianist Randall Hodgkinson. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Sept. 15 at 7:30 and Sept. 18 at 4.)

Kent Tritle—Organist, playing the Vivaldi-Bach D-Minor Concerto Grosso, Mendelssohn's Sonata No. 3, Franck's "Pièce Héroïque," and Duruflé's Suite (Op. 5). (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. Sept. 18 at 4. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Samuel Bartos—The tale of Bach composing his "Goldberg" Variations for a student to play during a count's sleepless nights is charming, but probably untrue. Mr. Bartos, who has made a specialty of the set, performs it here on the piano, along with three Chopin études. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Sept. 18 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Volume Dealers—Natives know that New York Is Book Country all year round, but on Sept. 16-18 bibliophiles will have a chance to celebrate publicly. On Sept. 18, from 11 to 6, Fifth Ave. between 48th and 57th Sts. becomes a book browser's dream—some hundred and fifty publishers, booksellers, and small presses will set up shop on the boulevard. Other highlights follow. Sept. 16 at 6: The Chinatown History Museum will offer "Putting Asian-American Literature on the Map," a panel discussion with Kimiko Hahn, Julie Koo, and Soo Mee Kwon. (70 Mulberry St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 16 at 6: The Small Press Center will lead a discussion on electronic publishing. (20 W. 44th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 10: A walking tour of the resting places of literary figures at Green-Wood Cemetery. For more information, call 1-718 469-5277. . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at 2:30: Writers Theatre Productions will stage readings of stories by Kate Chopin and Charles Dickens, among others. (Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Raptor Watch—New Yorkers have returned to their autumn homes, but hawks and other raptors are just now migrating south. Grab your binoculars; the tours listed below will help with the flight plans. Sept. 16 at 1:30: A naturalist will help you keep your eyes peeled for red-tailed hawks and falcons at the New York Botanical Garden. (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. 1-718 817-8700.) . . . ¶ Sept. 17-18, from 11 to 4: The Urban Park Rangers will meet at Belvedere Castle to lead Operation Hawk Watch. This year, visitors have seen osprey and golden and bald eagles. (Mid-Park at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 2: A hawk walk at Wave Hill. During last year's tour, ospreys, sharp-shinned hawks, and a bald eagle were spotted. (Independence Ave. at 249th St., the Bronx. 1-718 549-3200.)

Art Is Bustin' Out All Over—The SoHo Block Party will celebrate openings at some hundred galleries, including the Drawing Center, Artists Space, and Brooke Alexander, on Sept. 17, from 5 to 8. (Greene St. and environs, between Houston and Canal St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ "A Day of Performance Art," from 11:30 to 11, will round out the festivities. The live performances include Doug and Mike's Adult Entertainment and the Drag King Revue. (The Contemporary, 45 Greene St. No tickets necessary.)

Mob Scene—The annual feast of San Gennaro honors the patron saint of Naples. According to legend, a sample of his blood liquefies on Sept. 19, the anniversary of his martyrdom. Little Italy becomes a boardwalk town; beginning Sept. 15, visitors can eat sausage heroes, zeppole, and cotton candy, and listen to traditional Italian music. (Mulberry St. between Prince and Canal Sts. Daily, from 11 A.M. to 11:30 P.M. Through Sept. 25.)

New South Africa—Native crafts, dance, and music will be part of the South African Arts and Crafts Market in Grand Central Terminal, which begins on Sept. 20, from 10 to 7. The main waiting room will house the marketplace, which will include art work, textiles, and handcrafted clothing. From noon to 2, South African musicians and dancers will entertain in the main lobby. (Through Sept. 24.)

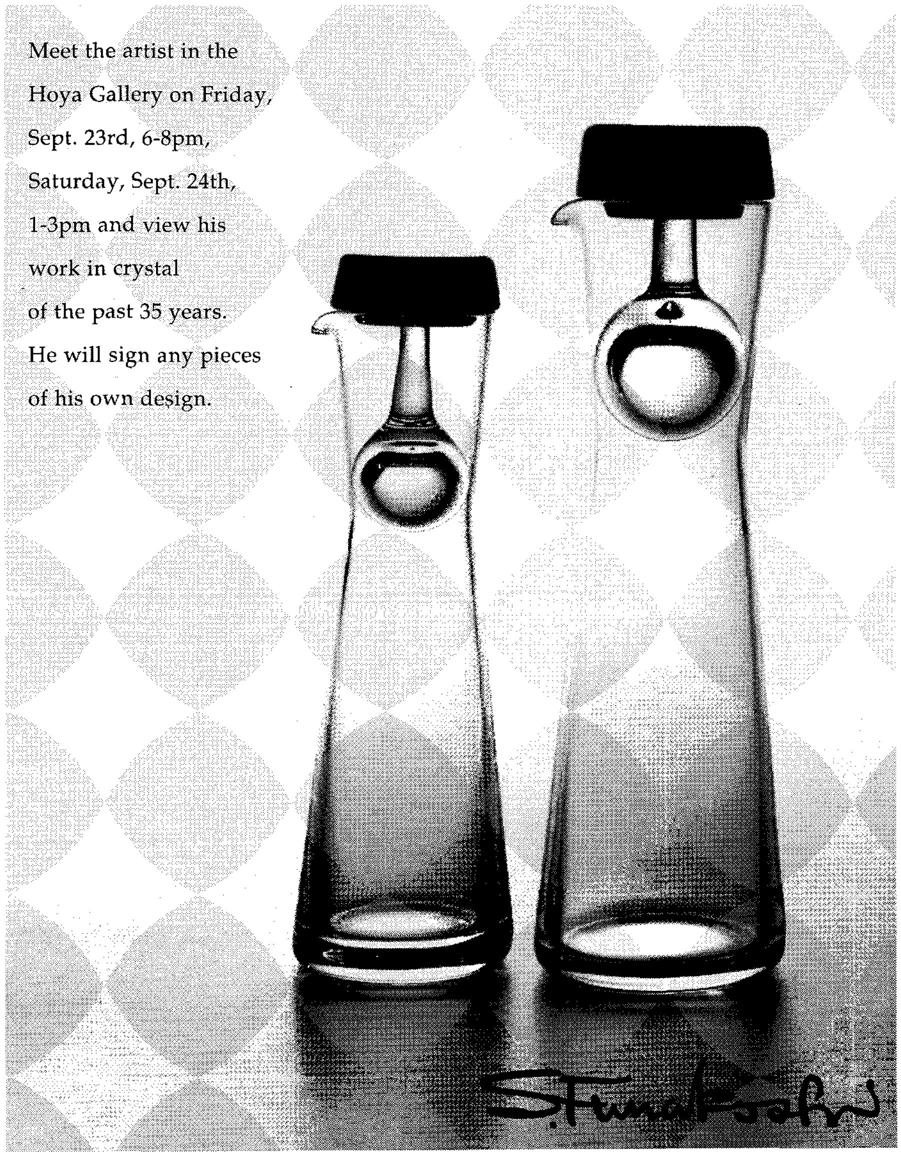
Indoor Eyre—The double parlor at the Old Merchant's House Museum will be the setting for Lisa Hayes' one-woman show, "Jane Eyre." (29 E. 4th St. 777-1089. Sept. 19-20 at 7:30.)

Earthly Delights—The Conservatory Garden, nestled in Central Park's northern end, will present an exhibit on Sept. 18, from 1 to 5, of watercolors, photographs, and other images of the formal garden. At 2:30, there will be a tour of the six-acre area, which includes crab-apple allées and flower beds. The walk will be followed by a jazz performance, at 3:30. (Central Park, Fifth Ave. at 105th St. No tickets necessary.)

City Hicks—The Queens County Farm Museum will be the site of the annual Queens County Fair, featuring corn-husking and pie-eating contests, sack races, craft-making demonstrations, and livestock competitions. (73-50 Little Neck Parkway, Floral Park. 1-718 347-3276. Sept. 17-18, from 11 to 6.)

Gimme Shelter—Jayne Anne Phillips will give two free readings from her new novel, "Shelter." (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. Sept. 19 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Three Lives and Company, 154 W. 10th St., at Waverly Pl. Sept. 20 at 7.)

Readings—Sept. 20 at 1: Composer-songwriter-author Elizabeth Swados will read from her own work. (Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 7: Lucille Clifton and Karen Swenson, whose new books of poetry are out from Copper Canyon Press, will read from their own work. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 8: Paul Auster will read from his new novel, "Mr.



Oil & Vinegar Bottles by Saburo Funakoshi. 8 oz., $150, 5 oz., $125. Hoya Crystal Gallery, 450 Park Ave. at 57th St., NY, NY 10022. Oil & Vinegar Bottles, designed in 1960, will be on display in the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** as part of the **Japanese Design: A Survey Since 1950** exhibition, Sept. 25th to Nov. 20th. For more information please call **(800) 462-HOYA**.

MUSEUM CRYSTAL
HOYA

Vertigo." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Sept. 18 at 8: Mario Cuomo will talk with Charlie Rose. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 7: Photographer Tina Barney will screen and discuss her new film about photographer Jan Groover. (School of Visual Arts amphitheatre, 209 E. 23rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Walks & Tours—Sept. 17 at 1: The Municipal Art Society will explore Edith Wharton's New York, from Madison Square to Gramercy Park. For more information, call 439-1049. . . . ¶ Sept. 18 at noon: The Green Guerrillas will lead a tour of the Lower East Side's community gardens. Meets at the Liz Christy garden. (Northeast corner of Houston St. and the Bowery. For more information, call 674-8124.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

International Festival of Puppet Theatre—Sept. 17 at 11 and 2, and Sept. 18 at 2 and 4: Teatro Gioco Vita, of Italy, presents "Pescetopococcodrillo" ("Fish-mouse-crocodile"). . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 11 and 2, and Sept. 18 at 1 and 3: Hobey Ford's Golden Rod Puppets in "Turtle Island Tales." (Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

"Sculptural Concerns"—Make necklaces, pins, and earrings from everyday objects, in a session at the American Craft Museum. Recommended ages: four and older. Preregistration is required. (40 W. 53rd St. 956-3535. Sept. 17, from 11 to 2.)

Joy Luck—Author Amy Tan reads from her two books for children, "The Chinese Siamese Cat" and "The Moon Lady." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Sept. 17 at 11.)

Tell It Again—Storyteller Diane Wolkstein has been telling "Elsie Piddock Skips in Her Sleep," about an elderly champion rope-skipper, annually for twenty-seven years, and she'll do so again on Sept. 17 at 11, at the Hans Christian Andersen statue in Central Park. A jump-rope competition follows the story. (Fifth Ave. at 72nd St., just west of the Conservatory Water. No tickets necessary.)

"Up on the Roof"—The charming "Tar Beach" exhibit at the Children's Museum of Manhattan is based on the artist Faith Ringgold's semi-autobiographical book about growing up in Harlem in the forties. On Sept. 17 (at 2 and 4) the museum hosts a program on Ringgold's art work, with some jazz on the bill as well. Recommended ages: four and older. (212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234.)

Songs in the Garden—Peter Yarrow (of Peter, Paul & Mary fame) in an outdoor family-oriented concert. (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. 1-718 817-8700. Sept. 18 at 4:30.)

SPORTS

FOOTBALL

Giants—Vs. the Washington Redskins, Sept. 18 at 4.

Jets—Away until Sept. 25, when they'll face the Chicago Bears.

(The Giants and the Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111.)

POLO

U.S. Open Polo Championship—Bethpage State Park Polo Grounds, Long Island. Sept. 17-18 at 3. For tickets, call 307-7171. Through Sept. 25.

IN-LINE SKATING

Marathon—The 1994 New York City Skate Marathon and In-Line Festival will take place on Sept. 16-17. For more information, call the New York Road Skaters Association, at 534-7858.

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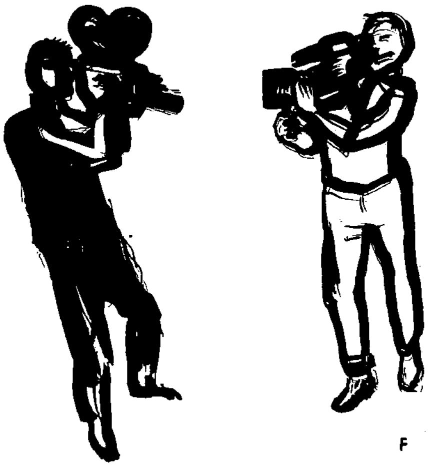


THE MOVIES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			14	15	16	17
18	19	20				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 39.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "The Advocate" (directed by Leslie Megahey), with Colin Firth.

Theatre 2: "Café au Lait" (†).

Theatre 3: "What Happened Was . . ." (Tom Noonan), with Karen Sillas and Noonan.

Theatre 4: "Barcelona" (†).

Theatre 5: "Killing Zoe" (†).

Theatre 6: "Eat Drink Man Woman" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

A program of short films by young African-American filmmakers; and "The Satin Slipper" (1985, Manoel de Oliveira; in French).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "True Lies" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "The Client" (†) and "It Could Happen to You" (Andrew Bergman). From Sept. 16: "Blue Sky" (Tony Richardson).

Theatre 3: "Trial by Jury" (Heywood Gould).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)

Theatre 1: "Natural Born Killers" (†).

Theatre 2: "Clear and Present Danger" (†).

Theatre 3: "Forrest Gump" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert" (†).

Theatre 5: "Natural Born Killers" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Next Karate Kid" (Christopher Cain).

Theatre 7: "Fresh" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

"Paul Bowles: The Complete Outsider" (Regina Weinreich and Catherine Warnow).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: "A Simple Twist of Fate" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Mask" (†).

Theatre 3: "A Good Man in Africa" (Bruce Beresford).

Theatre 4: "Corrina, Corrina" (†).

Theatre 5: "The Lion King" (†).

Theatre 6: "Color of Night" (†).

Theatre 7: Through Sept. 15: "White" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in Polish and French). From Sept. 16: "The New Age" (Michael Tolkin).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "Trial by Jury" (Heywood Gould).

Theatre 2: "A Good Man in Africa" (Bruce Beresford).

Theatre 3: "Corrina, Corrina" (†).

Theatre 4: Through Sept. 15: "Milk Money" (Richard Benjamin). From Sept. 16: "Blue Sky" (Tony Richardson).

Theatre 5: "A Simple Twist of Fate" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "The Client" (†).

Theatre 2: "Natural Born Killers" (†).

Theatre 3: "Color of Night" (†).

Theatre 4: "Trial by Jury" (Heywood Gould).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "Forrest Gump" (†).

Theatre 2: "Clear and Present Danger" (†).

Theatre 3: "True Lies" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

Through Sept. 15: "Milk Money" (Richard Benjamin).

From Sept. 16: "Timecop" (Peter Hyams).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Barcelona" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "The Lion King" (†).

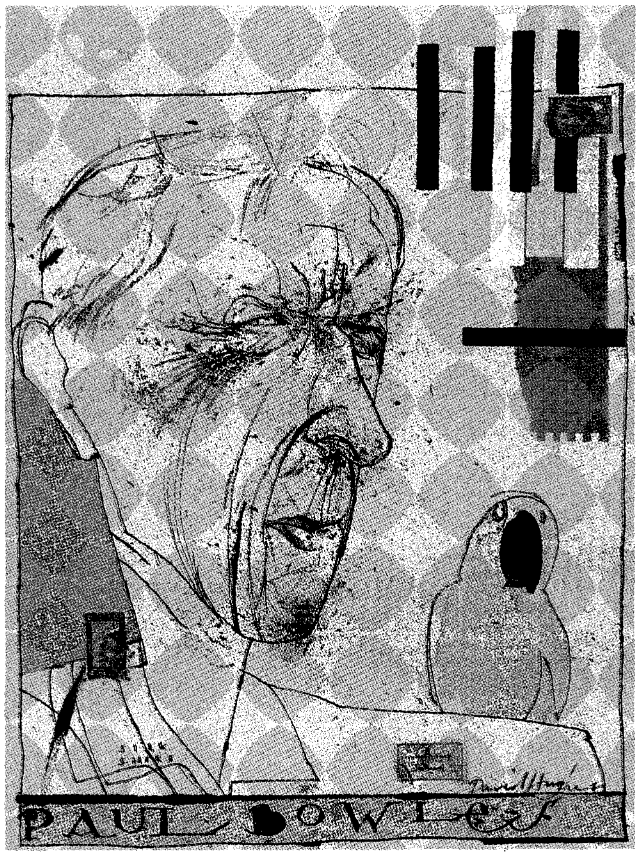
Theatre 2: "Color of Night" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"A Simple Twist of Fate" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Spanking the Monkey" (†).



At Cinema Village, "Paul Bowles: The Complete Outsider."

DAVID HUGHES

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "True Lies" (†).

Theatre 2: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"The Client" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Forrest Gump" (†).

Theatre 2: "Forrest Gump" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: "Quiz Show" (†).

Theatre 2: "A Good Man in Africa" (Bruce Beresford), with Colin Friels and Sean Connery.

Theatre 3: "The Mask" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)

Theatre 1: "Eat Drink Man Woman" (†).

Theatre 2: "Speed" (Jan De Bont).

Theatre 3: Through Sept. 15: "The Little Rascals" (Penelope Spheeris). From Sept. 16: "Blue Sky" (Tony Richardson).

Theatre 4: Through Sept. 15: "Milk Money" (Richard Benjamin). From Sept. 16: "Timecop" (Peter Hyams).

Theatre 5: "Fresh" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Next Karate Kid" (Christopher Cain).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 15: "It Could Happen to You" (Andrew Bergman). From Sept. 16: "Princess Caraboo" (Michael Austin).

Theatre 2: "Trial by Jury" (Heywood Gould).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Natural Born Killers" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "Rapa Nui" (Kevin Reynolds).

Theatre 2: "Clear and Present Danger" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

"The Advocate" (Leslie Megahey), with Colin Firth.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

Through Sept. 15: "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert" (†).

From Sept. 16: "The New Age" (Michael Tolkin).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"Clear and Present Danger" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 15: "True Lies" (†). From Sept. 16: "Timecop" (Peter Hyams).

Theatre 2: "Corrina, Corrina" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)

Theatre 1: "Milk Money" (Richard Benjamin).

Theatre 2: "Forrest Gump" (†).

Theatre 3: "Color of Night" (†).

Theatre 4: "Natural Born Killers" (†).

Theatre 5: Through Sept. 15: "The Next Karate Kid" (Christopher Cain). From Sept. 16: "Blue Sky" (Tony Richardson).

Theatre 6: "A Good Man in Africa" (Bruce Beresford), with Colin Friels and Sean Connery.

Theatre 7: "Trial by Jury" (Heywood Gould).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: "A Simple Twist of Fate" (†).

Theatre 2: "Fresh" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: "In the Land of the Deaf" (directed by Nicolas Philibert).

Theatre 2: Sept. 14: "Blade Runner" (1982, Ridley Scott), with Harrison Ford and Rutger Hauer. . . . Sept. 15: About a hundred minutes of coming attractions for science-fiction, horror, and fantasy films (pick your favorite films for next year's ninth summer festival). . . . From Sept. 16 (except Sept. 19): "La Grande Illusion" (1937, Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio; and "A Day in the Country" (†). . . . Sept. 19: Three Tod Browning films—"The Show" (1927), "Fast Workers" (1933), and "Miracles for Sale" (1939).

Theatre 3: Through Sept. 15: "The Boys of St. Vincent" (John N. Smith). From Sept. 16: "The Conformist" (1970, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian).

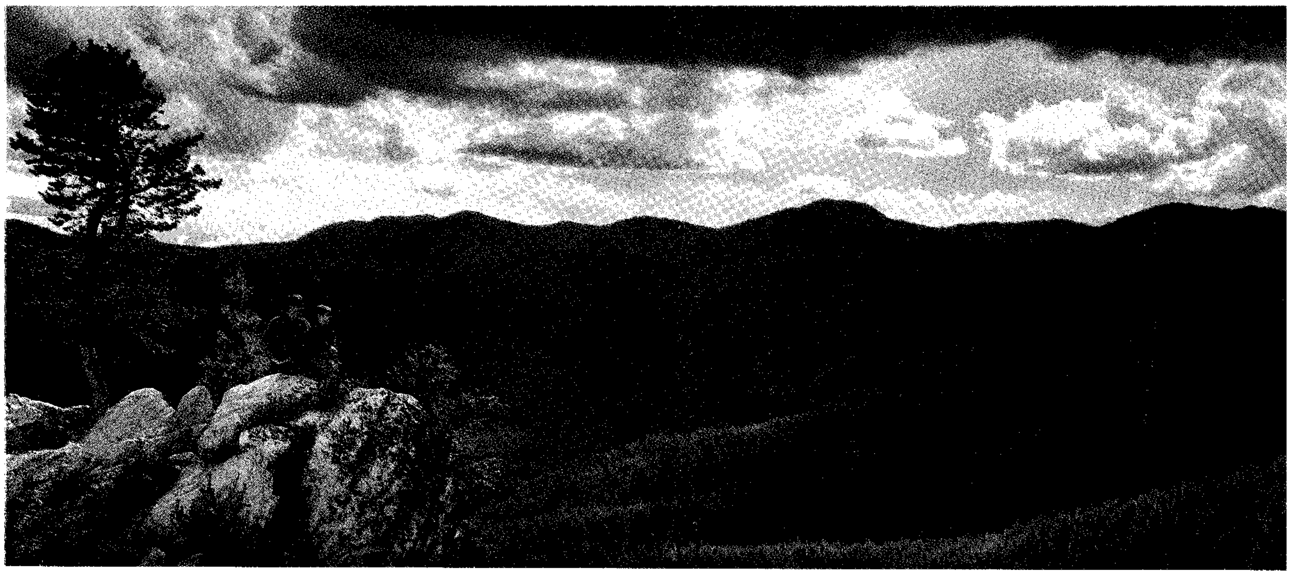
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "Speed" (Jan De Bont).

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg). From Sept. 16: "Timecop" (Peter Hyams).

“Who’s going to make sure the trees will be here tomorrow?”

“Not an easy question. But that’s what my son asked the other day. He’s thinking about it. Just like everybody. He wants to know if the trees will still be around when he grows up. Well, working for Georgia-Pacific like I do, I can tell him we’re doing our part. Planting new trees by the millions. Setting aside land. Making sure the trees will always be here. For everybody. Of course, I can’t speak for other companies out there. But I know we’re doing what’s right.” Steve Delfs, Forester. **Georgia-Pacific**



MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Milk Money" (Richard Benjamin).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "The Little Rascals" (Penelope Spheeris). From Sept. 16: "Blue Sky" (Tony Richardson).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Ciao, Professore!" (†); and "Latcho Drom" (Tony Gatlif, in Romany).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "December Bride" (Thaddeus O'Sullivan). From Sept. 16: "Making Up!" (Katja von Garnier; in German) and "The Coriolis Effect" (Louis Venosta).
Theatre 3: "Salmonberries" (Percy Adlon).
Theatre 4: "Spanking the Monkey" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "True Lies" (†).
Theatre 2: "Clear and Present Danger" (†).
Theatre 3: "Color of Night" (†).
Theatre 4: "Natural Born Killers" (†).
Theatre 5: "Natural Born Killers" (†).
Theatre 6: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 7: "Barcelona" (†).
Theatre 8: "Rapa Nui" (Kevin Reynolds), with Jason Scott Lee, Esai Morales, and Sandrine Holt.
Theatre 9: Through Sept. 15: "Clear and Present Danger" (†). From Sept. 16: "Timecop" (Peter Hyams).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Next Karate Kid" (Christopher Cain).
Theatre 2: "Fresh" (†).
Theatre 3: "Andre" (George Miller) and "Blankman" (Mike Binder).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Forrest Gump" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Wolf" (Mike Nichols).
Theatre 2: "The Shadow" (Russell Mulcahy).
Theatre 3: "Blown Away" (Stephen Hopkins).
Theatre 4: "The Flintstones" (Brian Levant) and "Wyatt Earp" (Lawrence Kasdan).
Theatre 5: "Maverick" (Richard Donner).
Theatre 6: "Beverly Hills Cop III" (John Landis).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"True Lies" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Ciao, Professore!" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).
Theatre 2: "Barcelona" (†).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"Killing Zoe" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"À la Mode" (Rémy Duchemin, in French).

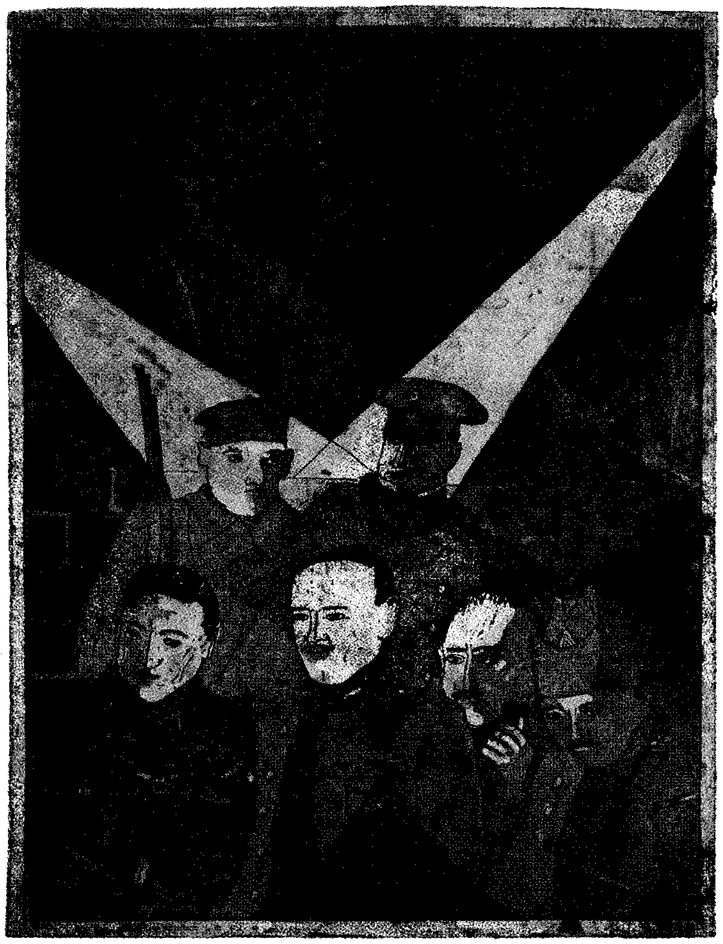
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Widows' Peak" (John Irvin).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"A Simple Twist of Fate" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Corrina, Corrina" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Fresh" (†).
Theatre 2: "Café au Lait" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert" (†).
Theatre 4: "Eat Drink Man Woman" (†).
Theatre 5: "Red Rock West" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"True Lies" (†).


At Film Forum 2, Jean Renoir's "La Grande Illusion."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Trial by Jury" (Heywood Gould), with Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, Armand Assante, Gabriel Byrne, and William Hurt.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "Milk Money" (Richard Benjamin). From Sept. 16: "Blue Sky" (Tony Richardson).
Theatre 3: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 4: "Natural Born Killers" (†).
Theatre 5: "Clear and Present Danger" (†).
Theatre 6: "A Good Man in Africa" (Bruce Beresford), with Colin Friels and Sean Connery.

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "The Client" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "It Could Happen to You" (Andrew Bergman). From Sept. 16: "Timecop" (Peter Hyams).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Next Karate Kid" (Christopher Cain).
Theatre 2: "The Little Rascals" (Penelope Spheeris) and "Color of Night" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "A Good Man in Africa" (directed by Bruce Beresford), with Colin Friels and Sean Connery.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "The Client" (†). From Sept. 16: "Blue Sky" (Tony Richardson).
Theatre 3: "Trial by Jury" (Heywood Gould), with Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, Armand Assante, Gabriel Byrne, and William Hurt.
Theatre 4: "Corrina, Corrina" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Mask" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Next Karate Kid" (Christopher Cain).
Theatre 7: "Natural Born Killers" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Color of Night" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Fresh" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 3: "Milk Money" (Richard Benjamin).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Clear and Present Danger" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "The Little Rascals" (Penelope Spheeris); and "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "Blankman" (Mike Binder). From Sept. 16: "Timecop" (Peter Hyams).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films from M-G-M studios. Sept. 15 at 2:30: "Dead of Winter" (1987, directed by Arthur Penn), with Mary Steenburgen, Roddy McDowall, and Jan Rubes. . . . Sept. 15 at 6: "Madame Satan" (1930, Cecil B. De Mille). . . . Sept. 15 at 8: "The Circle" (1925, Frank Borzage) and "The Monster" (1925, Roland West). . . . Sept. 16 at 1: "Ben-Hur" (†). . . . Sept. 16 at 6 and Sept. 18 at 2:30: "The Crowd" (1928, King Vidor), with Eleanor Boardman and James Murray. . . . Sept 16 at 8 and Sept. 18 at 12:30: "Wild Oranges" (1924, Vidor). . . . Sept. 17 at 12:30 and Sept. 20 at 6: "The Merry Widow" (1925, Erich von Stroheim), with Mae Murray and John Gilbert. . . . Sept. 17 at 3 and Sept. 20 at 2:30: "The Merry Widow" (1934, Ernst Lubitsch), with Jeanette MacDonald and Maurice Chevalier. . . . Sept. 17 at 5: "Mrs. Miniver" (†). . . . Sept. 18 at 5: "Ben-Hur" (1925, Fred Niblo), with Ramon Novarro and Francis X. Bushman. . . . Sept. 19 at 2:30: "Pretty Ladies" (1925, Monta Bell), with ZaSu Pitts; and "Lights of Old Broadway" (1925, Bell), with Marion Davies. . . . ¶ A program of television films by, or about, Alan Clarke. Sept. 16 at 3 and Sept. 18 at 5: "Penda's Fen" (1974). . . . Sept. 16 at 6:30: "The Firm" (1988). . . . Sept. 16 at 8 and Sept. 19 at 3: "Director, Alan Clarke" (1991, Corin Campbell-Hill). . . . Sept. 17 at 2:30: "Diane" (1975). . . . Sept. 17 at 5 and Sept. 19 at 6: "Scum" (1977). . . . Sept. 18 at 2:30: "Beloved Enemy" (1980).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—From Sept. 14, a program of new films from Turkey. . . . ¶ Sept. 17-18 at 2: "The Master of Ballantrae" (1953, William Keighley), with Errol Flynn.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Sept. 17 at 2: A program of films with Fatty Arbuckle and Buster Keaton. . . . Sept. 17 at 4: "The Round Up" (1920, George Melford), with Arbuckle. . . . Sept. 18 at 2: "Leap Year" (1921, James Cruze), with Arbuckle. . . . Sept. 18 at 4: A program of short films, from 1932-33, with Arbuckle.

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Sept. 18 at 7, author John Weir will introduce his favorite film, "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—Sept. 16 at 7: "The Big Chill" (1983, Lawrence Kasdan). . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 3: "Hook" (1991, Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams. . . . ¶ Sept. 17 at 7: "Autumn Leaves" (1956, Robert Aldrich), with Joan Crawford.

Goethe House, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (439-8700)—Sept. 19 at 6 and Sept. 20 at 8: "Go Trabi Go" (1991, Peter Timm). . . . ¶ Sept. 19 at 8: "Hallo Comrade" (1993, Manfred Stelzer). . . . ¶ Sept. 20 at 6: "No More Mister Nice Guy" (1992, Detlev Buck).

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Blue Sky—Tony Richardson's final film is a psychological drama set in the late fifties, starring Tommy Lee Jones as an Air Force nuclear engineer and Jessica Lange as his flamboyant wife. With Powers Boothe, Carrie Snodgress, Amy Locane, and Chris O'Donnell. Written by Rama Laurie Stagner, Arlene Sarner, and Jerry Leichtling. Opening September 16.

In the Land of the Deaf—A French documentary about communication and culture among the deaf. Directed by Nicolas Philibert. Opening September 14.

Making Up! and **The Coriolis Effect**—Two short films. "Making Up," a one-hour romantic comedy by the German director Katja von Garnier, tells the story of a cartoonist who finds new inspiration after an unpredictable first date. Louis Venosta's half-hour film "The Coriolis Effect" is a chronicle of bad weather and complicated love lives involving two tornado chasers and two young women. With Dana Ashbrook, James Wilder, Jennifer Rubin, and Corinne Bohrer. Opening September 16.

The New Age—Michael Tolkin, the author of "The Player," wrote and directed this satire about a Los Angeles couple (Judy Davis and Peter Weller) who open a boutique to finance their divorce. With Adam West, Patrick Bauchau, John Diehl, and Paula Marshall. Opening September 16.

Princess Caraboo—A historical drama, set in England in 1817, based on an actual incident. An exotic young woman (Phoebe Cates) who speaks an unknown language appears in a village and manages both to charm those she meets and to arouse their suspicions. Stephen Rea co-stars as a newspaperman. With Jim Broadbent, Wendy Hughes, Kevin Kline, and John Lithgow. Directed by Michael Austin, who collaborated with John Wells on the screenplay. Opening September 16.

Quiz Show—Robert Redford directed Paul Attanasio's script about the television-game-show scandals of the fifties. With Ralph Fiennes, Rob Morrow, John Turturro, Elizabeth Wilson, and Paul Scofield. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening September 14.

The Satin Slipper—Manoel de Oliveira's two-part, seven-hour film, based on Paul Claudel's play about a shipwrecked conquistador. A shorter version was shown at the 1985 New York Film Festival. In French. Opening September 14.

Timecop—Time travel is illegal in the twenty-first century, but that doesn't stop this movie's villains, whom Jean-Claude Van Damme must chase back and forth through history. With Ron Silver and Mia Sara. Written by Mark Verheiden and directed by Peter Hyams. Opening September 16.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert—Paragons of camp become summer campers, of sorts, in this cult-pleasing tale of a transsexual (Terence Stamp) and two drag queens (Hugo Weaving and Guy Pearce) who take a lip-synching act from Sydney to a resort in arid central Australia. (The title refers to their bus.) Stephan Elliott, the writer-director, has one original idea—posing creatures of the night in wild sunbaked settings. Apart from these forays into the picturesque picaresque, and Stamp's terrific deadpan gravity, the movie indulges in predictable transvestite laughs and heartbreaks; as crossover drag sagas go, it's neither as robustly funny as "La Cage aux Folles" nor as lively and poetic as the best parts of "Outrageous!"—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . ¶ Tower East; through Sept. 15.)

Barcelona—The second film by the writer and director Whit Stillman ("Metropolitan") is a culture-clash comedy about a pair of conservative young Americans (played by Taylor Nichols and Chris Eigeman) in early-eighties Barcelona. Although the picture begins promisingly, its charm peters out fast. Every scene seems to make the same not very interesting point: that Americans get a bum rap from foreigners. This movie isn't a carbon copy of Stillman's début feature, but it doesn't feel like much of an advance, either. His style is placid and a little smug—prematurely gray. In just two movies he has found the sort of rut that most filmmakers take decades to settle into.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/15/94.) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, Chelsea Cinemas, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Café au Lait—The début feature from Mathieu Kassovitz, a young French director trying very hard not to be the Jewish Spike Lee, and only just succeeding. Kassovitz plays Félix, an annoying young bike messenger—shades of "She's Gotta Have It." Further similarities are hardly dispelled by a heroine (the dreamy Julie Mauduech) who refuses to confine her charms to a single man. Félix has a rival for her affections, a wealthy black student (Hubert Kounde); after a raucous and unconvincing start, the movie settles down nicely into a good-natured love triangle. Kassovitz may yearn to be an Angry Young Man, but, this film portends a traditional career in the comedy of the bourgeoisie. In French.—A.L. (9/12/94) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Ciao, Professore!—It's a baggy-pants comedy version of "Christ Stopped at Eboli," with Paolo Villaggio as an idealistic third-grade teacher from Northern Italy mistakenly assigned to the squalid Neapolitan village of Corzano. The conflicts he faces are played for guffaws as well as poignancy. Smacking one tough kid anguishes Villaggio, but the director, Lina Wertmüller, thinks it makes him more of a man; she replaces the usual schoolhouse sanctimony with her salt-of-the-earth smugness. Many of the boys and girls are so unvaryingly "lively" you wish Villaggio would try to solve their problems by administering Ritalin. In Italian.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

Clear and Present Danger—Further adventures of Jack Ryan (Harrison Ford), the courageous and incorruptible C.I.A. analyst who is the hero of Tom Clancy's ungainly novels. The director, Phillip Noyce, whose "Patriot Games" (1992) was a surprisingly elegant Clancy adaptation, has once again taken a tub of prose and sweated it into a sleek, classically proportioned suspense picture. The screenwriters—Donald Stewart, Steven Zaillian, and John Milius—do a terrific job of keeping the insanely intricate plot from bogging down in confusion. And Noyce brings off a couple of memorable thriller set pieces: a furious, brilliantly edited ambush in a narrow Bogotá street; a tense and funny computer duel between Ryan and a weaselly C.I.A. bureaucrat played by Henry Czerny. The filmmakers haven't simply tamed the rogue elephant of Clancy's narrative; they've turned it into something that moves as gracefully and as powerfully as a gazelle.—T.R. (8/15/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

The Client—Joel Schumacher's thriller, based on a John Grisham best-seller, has a familiar chase-picture plot: innocent citizen stumbles on some incriminating information about the Mob, and runs like hell. The reluctant witness here is an eleven-year-old Memphis boy, Mark Sway (Brad Renfro), whose lawyer, Reggie Love (Susan Sarandon), acts as a sort of surrogate mother. Her legal duel with the steely prosecutor Roy Foltrigg (Tommy

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The fact is, we do not know.

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And it is a matter of fact that in goes the translucent stripling spirit. And out comes amber-gold nectar positively *billowing* with flavour.

But let us take our cue from a party of scientists whom we once invited to explore the matter. '*Magic!*' they exclaimed, swigging their drams in a most unboffinly manner. 'But magic is merely undiscovered science and we'd like to take some home *for further investigation.*'

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

Lee Jones), who wants Mark to testify, plays like a desperate, drawn-out custody battle. This is safe-as-houses entertainment, directed with no particular finesse, but it's refreshingly straightforward and unpretentious. It's the first Grisham-based thriller that actually lowers itself to provide a thrill or two.—T.R. (8/1/94) (Murray Hill Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Criterion Center; through Sept. 15.)

Color of Night—This comic murder mystery about psychotherapists and their patients is the first movie that Richard Rush has directed since "The Stunt Man" (1980), and it gives the audience nearly as wild a ride. The cut version of the film, which is now playing in theatres, is terrifically enjoyable, but it's so unstable that it plays as parody: it's the "Beat the Devil" of erotic thrillers. In the director's cut—which is six minutes longer and will be released on video—the plot actually makes some sense, and the performances of the stars, Bruce Willis and Jane March, are much more effective. The theatrical version is worth seeing, though, for Rush's witty, imaginative visual conceits, and for the sensational supporting cast, which includes Rubén Blades, Lesley Ann Warren, Brad Dourif, Kevin J. O'Connor, Lance Henriksen, and Scott Bakula. Screenplay by Matthew Chapman and Billy Ray—T.R. (9/5/94) (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and Embassy 1.)

Corrina, Corrina—It's the fifties, and Ray Liotta is a widowed, atheistic jingle writer searching for a housekeeper who can also play surrogate mommy for seven-year-old Tina Majorino. He lucks out with Whoopi Goldberg. She boasts a degree in musicology and she's a natural with kids and with words—she can crack a rhyme scheme for Jell-O Instant Pudding. Goldberg gives a varied, even jazzy performance as Ms. Wonderful. But the movie is hopelessly pedantic—chock full of lessons about grief, racism, and, so help us, God. The bright spots include Joan Cusack's ticky cameo as Goldberg's tippling, sex-starved predecessor; Curtis Williams, Jr.,'s showoff gaiety as Goldberg's nephew; club singer Jevetta Steele doing "Over the Rainbow"; and choice cuts by Sarah Vaughan, Dinah Washington, and Louis Armstrong on the soundtrack. Jessie Nelson produced, directed, and wrote the semi-autobiographical script.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center.)

Eat Drink Man Woman—Another film comedy from Ang Lee, the director of "The Wedding Banquet." The aging Mr. Chu (Sihung Lung) is a widowed chef, living in Taipei with his three daughters, each of whom is getting itchy for the world beyond. (Watch out for the exquisite Chien-Lien Wu as Jia-Chien, the pushiest of the three.) Mr. Chu is a King Lear of the kitchen: a master on his own ground, slapping fish around and blowing air into a boiled duck, but gradually losing his sense of taste and his power to rule. The movie is more likable than memorable; you come out running for the nearest restaurant. In Mandarin.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Forrest Gump—As all the world now knows, Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, a simple Alabama soul who serves his country without hurting a fly; he saves his comrades in Vietnam, woos the dippy Jenny (Robin Wright), and runs back and forth across the continent. Hanks does his best to convince us that Gump is, in fact, a character, and not merely a bulging sack of virtues, but the movie takes the fight out of him. With Sally Field and Gary Sinise. Directed by Robert Zemeckis.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Fresh—A grim tale of New York youth fouled up in the drug trade. Fresh (Sean Nelson) runs heroin, plays truant, and annoys the rest of his family; finally, inspired by chess moves learned from his no-good father (Samuel L. Jackson), he turns the tables on two local dealers. Apart from one breathtaking spasm of violence at a basketball game, Boaz Yakin's first film is dulled by its own earnestness; it makes its big point about the moral limbo of these lives, then keeps on making it. Furious, but no fun.—A.L. (9/12/94) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, 86th Street East Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Embassy.)

Killing Zoe—The first-time director is Roger Avary, one of a new breed of filmmakers who appear to conceive of cinema as a superior form of abattoir. (He co-wrote "True Romance" and "Pulp Fiction.") Not since the dying days of Jacobean tragedy has this much blood been spilled in the name of public entertainment, although you'd be pressed to find anything tragic in the antics of Avary's creations. Eric Stoltz plays a safebreaker who comes to Paris to see an old friend, Eric (Jean-Hugues Anglade). Together with their band of merry men (the merriment is all heroin and liquor), they try to rob a bank, and foul it up. From time to time—during the opening credits, or at the start of the raid—the movie kicks into life, with traces of Godard in its hectic insouciance. But this eagerness to find a style has nothing to launch from—no obsessions, no arguments, no strong feelings, just a vague desire to rub our noses in the dirt. Also starring Julie Delpy as a whore with—of course—a heart of gold.—A.L. (8/22-29/94) (Angelika Film Center, and Angelika 57.)

The Lion King—Disney's new animated feature is a coming-of-age story about animal royalty. It's "Bambi," but with carnivores. The hero, a young lion named Simba, is born to the purple, but before he can ascend to the throne he has to make cute friends, court a soft-eyed female of the species, and see his father die (in a scene that may actually jerk kids' tears more shamelessly than its counterpart in "Bambi"). Between traumas, the movie serves up soothingly banal musical numbers (composed by Elton John and Tim Rice) and silly, rambunctious comedy. The animation, computer-assisted in some of the more elaborate sequences, is sometimes impressive, but rarely impressive enough to overcome a certain impersonality—a stubborn mechanical coldness. Among the celebrity voices on the soundtrack, two performances stand out: Jeremy Irons, as the villainous lion Scar, does an elegant, funny George Sanders impersonation, and Nathan Lane, reading the part of a peppy, skeptical meerkat, gives the picture a welcome shot of Warners-style brashness. Directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff.—T.R. (6/20/94) (Village East Cinemas, Sutton, and Embassy.)

The Mask—Genial goonery. Jim Carrey stars as a sweet loser who gets an id tune-up when he puts on a super-powered Norse mask and becomes a zoot-suited jolly green giant. Since Carrey looks as if he were made of Play-Doh anyway, the computer animation that allows him to bounce and gyrate appears to spring from his own pliable core. The funniest moment comes when Carrey mimes the effects of the Mask *without* special effects. The gangland plot is flimsy and the jokes are erratic, but it's a far better showcase for Carrey's comic-from-Uranus talent than "Ace Ventura." With Max as Milo the plucky terrier. Charles Russell directed Mike Werb's script.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Criterion Center.)

Natural Born Killers—"Bonnie and Clyde" in a blender. Oliver Stone uses fractured, blindingly fast editing to depict the warped consciousness of Mickey (Woody Harrelson) and Mallory (Juliette Lewis), a pair of young sociopaths in love. They're familiar types, and Stone's "ideas" about American violence turn out to be the same glib received notions that we've seen in countless other outlaw-couple movies. The oddest thing about this would-be satire is that, for all the gore and hysteria, the film doesn't feel particularly impassioned; it's a frivolous barrage—as pointlessly head-splitting as a Professor Irwin Corey monologue, and not nearly as funny. Also with Robert Downey, Jr., Tommy Lee Jones, Russell Means, and Rodney Dangerfield.—T.R. (9/5/94) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Quiz Show—Wih John Turturro, Ralph Fiennes, and Rob Morrow; directed by Robert Redford. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Cinema I.)

Red Rock West—This clever thriller about a good-hearted loner (Nicolas Cage) who trips and falls into a murder plot ranks tops among low-budget neo-noirs. Taut and deadpan witty, it makes spooky use of the setting—a small, windblown Western town—and its surprises actually add up: for once, an angular narrative serves to sharpen the characters. Dennis Hopper and J. T. Walsh do their freshest, snappiest work in years, and Lara Flynn Boyle is a tense, ambiguous love object. Cage's shaggy hangdog charm and core of intelligence and rectitude keep the audience rooting for the hero after several dumb moves. John Dahl's direction, like the script he wrote with his brother Rick, is sure and economical. Dwight Yoakam contributes a piquant cameo as a tough, helpful truck driver.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A Simple Twist of Fate—Despite the title, there are convolutions aplenty in this variation on George Eliot's "Silas Marner," set in present-day Virginia. Steve Martin, who stars, also wrote and executive-produced. In the hero's miser period, Martin shuffles gold coins as deftly as Chaplin's Monsieur Verdoux did banknotes. In the hero's single-parent period (he regenerates spiritually after taking in a foundling child), Martin fails to reimagine the character as thoroughly as he did Cyrano in his triumph "Roxanne." This script emits a whiff of high-minded nostalgia. Still, Eliot's plot withstands the forced transition, and Martin's performance gives the melodrama an emotional center. The director, Gillies MacKinnon, tries to conjure storybook moods, but casting Gabriel Byrne as a Southern politician and Stephen Baldwin as his kid brother strains even dream logic. Also with Catherine O'Hara.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Gotham Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, and Columbus Circle.)

Spanking the Monkey—A movie about mother-son incest may sound like a daring writing-directing début, but David O. Russell, the fledgling auteur, stacks the deck like an old sharpie. The mother (Alberta Watson) is frustrated, careless, confined to bed with a broken leg, and medicated for pain and depression. The son (Jeremy Davies) is pent up every which way. When he returns from his freshman year at M.I.T., his father (Benjamin Hendrickson) orders him to give up an internship with the surgeon general's office to take care of her. The absentee husband is oblivious and tyrannical toward them both. All-too-obvious psychological dynamics stunt even the black comedy. Watson displays spunk, but the only completely lucid and spontaneous performances are by young Carla Gallo as the boy's would-be girlfriend and Matthew Puckett as his cheerfully stupid buddy.—M.S. (Plaza, and Quad Cinema.)

True Lies—James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger join forces for their first outing since "Terminator 2," and it's a bumpy ride. Schwarzenegger stumbles into James Bond territory as a suave international spy named Harry Tasker; it's a stiff and rather sad sight. The middle chunk of the film defies belief—not with special effects, unfortunately, but with humdrum misogyny. Harry suspects his wife (Jamie Lee Curtis) of adultery, kidnaps her, and subjects her to a series of humiliations, apparently in an effort to win back her love. Yeah, right. Tom Arnold saves the show as Harry's sidekick.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Movieland 8th Street Sixplex, 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency. . . . ¶ Park & 86th Street Cinemas; through Sept. 15.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael.)

Ben-Hur (1959)—Movie moguls have always had a real affinity for the grandiosity of the old Roman Empire. Charlton Heston plays the Jewish prince Ben-Hur; when he refuses to rat on the Jews opposed to Roman domination, his childhood friend Messala (Stephen Boyd) packs him off to the galleys and sends his mother (Martha Scott) and his sister (Cathy O'Donnell) to a dungeon. After prolonged slaving at the oars, Ben-Hur escapes and saves the life of a bigwig in the Roman navy (Jack Hawkins), who adopts him. Eventually we get to the chariot race, with Ben-Hur pitted against the treacherous Messala. Lew Wallace's hectic potboiler-classic has everything—even leprosy. M-G-M laid on the cash and William Wyler directed, with several busy assistants; the cast includes Sam Jaffe, Haya Harareet, Hugh Griffith, Finlay Currie, and a corps of stuntmen.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 16.)

A Day in the Country (1937)—Jean Renoir's thirty-seven-minute film from a de Maupassant story is one of the two or three greatest short-story films ever made—a lyric tragedy that ranks with his finest work. Visually, it recaptures the Impressionist period; in tone, it accomplishes a transformation from light nostalgic comedy to despair. In the late eighteen-hundreds a merchant (Gabriello) takes his family for an outing on the banks of the Marne; there, his wife (Jeanne Marken) and his innocent young daughter (Sylvia Bataille) are seduced—the one delightedly, the other tremblingly, like a captured bird. Renoir himself plays the role of an innkeeper. In French.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting Sept. 16.)

Mrs. Miniver (1942)—M-G-M's wartime salute to gallant England, engineered to make the audience choke up. The theme is the gentry under fire, with, at the same time, some regard for the old nobility and a smile for the quaint antics of the servants under stress. Greer Garson is the excruciatingly proper paragon-heroine, courteous and controlled in every crisis, and Walter Pidgeon is her husband. William Wyler directed this generally offensive picture, adapted from a novel by Jan Struther; shamelessly, it ends with the heroic characters singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" in a partially destroyed church.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 17.)

Postcards from the Edge (1990)—This tale of a sorrowful, wisecracking starlet (Meryl Streep) whose brassy, boozing former-star mother (Shirley MacLaine) started her on sleeping pills when she was nine is camp without the zest of camp. It's camp played borderline straight—a druggy-Cinderella movie about an unformed girl who has to go past despair to find herself. The director, Mike Nichols, is a parodist who feigns sincerity, and his tone keeps slipping around. What's clear is that we're meant to be enthralled by the daughter's radiant face, her refinement, her honesty. The tacky, bright-colored film—a near-plotless version of a woman's picture—is weightless, yet it's watchable. Its jadedness appeals to the narcissism of show-biz insiders and to the would-be insider in the rest of us. The screenplay, by Carrie Fisher (with Nichols' uncredited collaboration), is based on her novel.—P.K. (A Different Light Bookstore; Sept. 18.)

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

A NOVEL DECISION

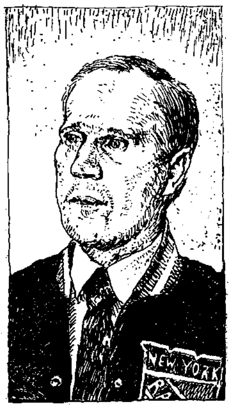
SINCE 1986, when she began writing her "Life in the 30's" column in the *Times*, Anna Quindlen has been a woman whom other women channel through—the coping mom, the grieving daughter, the striving professional, the outraged citizen. She is one of those modern performers, like Garrison Keillor or Spalding Gray, who have mastered the trick of being thoroughly private in public. It's a wearing exercise, and this past Friday Ms. Quindlen closed it down: she announced that at the end of the year she would be giving up her twice-weekly column.

When we reached Ms. Quindlen at her New Jersey home and asked what had moved her to leave the *Times*, quitting one of the most desirable jobs on the planet, she said, "I'm going to med school." Then she explained, "I finished my second novel, 'One True Thing,' in January." (It has just been published.) "I felt like I'd been wonderfully challenged, and I suddenly realized that if I wanted to I could do that all the time." Ms. Quindlen's thinking may have been focussed by a movie deal she reached for "One True Thing," as well as by a contract with Random House for a third novel.

Ms. Quindlen has been a reporter all her life—indeed, rumor had it that she was next in line for the *Times*' top editorial job—and we said that it must have been tough to decide to put down the tools. Ms. Quindlen agreed that she loved the *Times*, the people, etc., but said, "The reason I became a reporter was to support my fiction habit. Little did I realize that once I had three children the window of opportunity to do both those things was quite small." Her fans may be secretly pleased to know that even Anna Quindlen can't do it all.

HOME WITH THE RANGERS

POSSIBLY not everyone knows that Mike Keenan, the coach of the Rangers last season, when they won their first championship in fifty-four years, walked away from the team in the middle of the summer. He said that the Rangers had violated his contract by delivering his bonus check one day late, and he signed on as coach and general manager of the St. Louis Blues. Colin Campbell is the Rangers' new coach. Campbell had been an assistant coach for eight and a half years—three and a half of them with the Rangers—and that is what he expected to be this year, which may explain why he seemed a little subdued the other morning up at Playland, in Rye, where the Rangers practice and where the players reported to training camp last weekend.



Campbell was sitting behind the desk in an office on the back side of the rink, with a picture window looking out through a chain-link fence to Long Island Sound. There is a narrow strip of pavement outside the window, then the fence, and beyond it a sandy beach. On the desk were a telephone and some letters lined up in columns, as if Campbell had been playing solitaire with them.

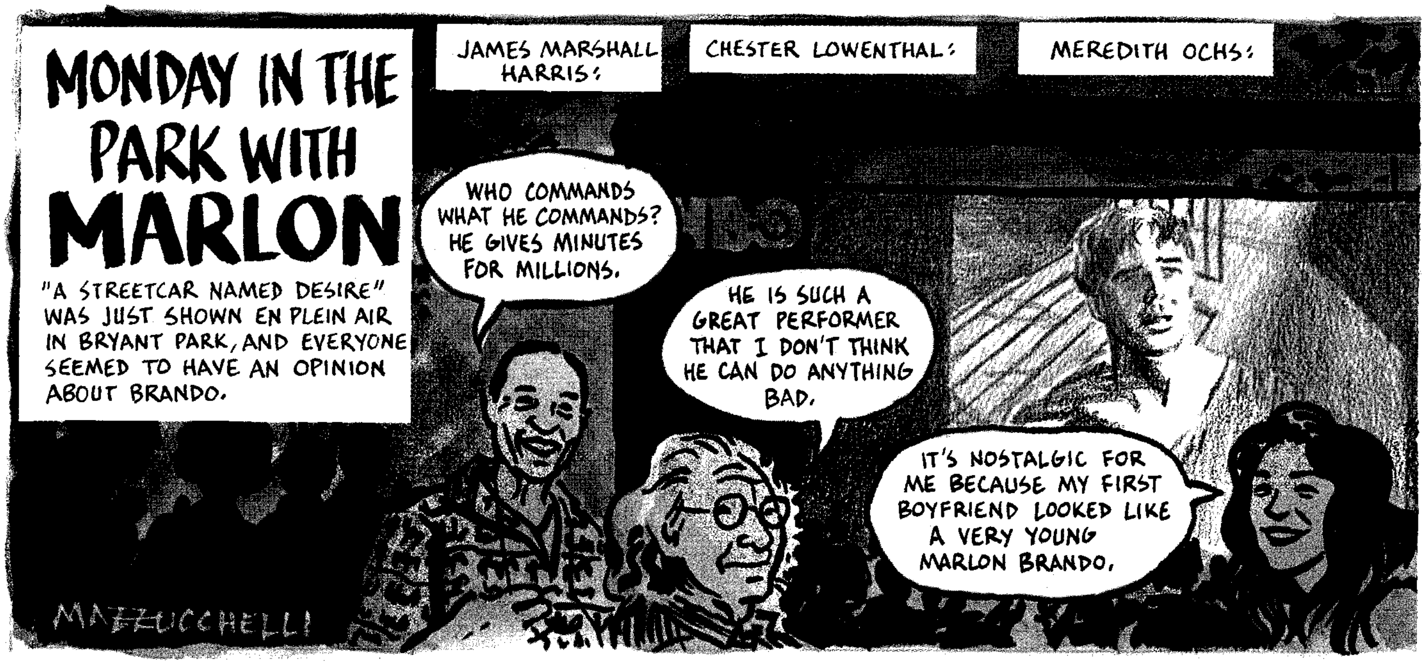
Campbell had just been on the ice with Mike Richter and Brian Leetch, the Rangers' star goalie and star defenseman, and with Gregory, his son, who is ten. He and Gregory had been shooting pucks in the corner, then Gregory said "Do you have any money?" and Campbell gave him twenty bucks. Gregory came back from the snack bar with a frosty blue drink and a hot dog and Campbell shook his head and said, "That kid's always eating."

About the Rangers, Campbell said, "This was unexpected, my becoming coach. It wasn't the plan, but I got where I wanted to be without having to move my family or sell my house, or learn the names and faces of the people in a new organization or my way around a new city, and how often does that happen? Barry Watkins, the Ranger P.R. guy, thought it would be good for me to talk to somebody about the pressures of coaching in New York, so they arranged for me to go up to Yankee Stadium and talk to Buck Showalter, the Yankees' manager. That was August. Day after I was appointed. Showalter's a small-town guy from the South who worked his way up through an organization, and I'm a small-town guy from Ontario who did the same thing."

Campbell took a call from a hockey writer in Calgary, then said, "I want to be one of the two teams playing for the Cup again. When you're in the finals, there's no out-of-town scores. And last year was such an extraordinary year, but three nights after the championship I woke up in a cold sweat, dreaming that

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARRETT HUDDLESTON

THE TALK OF THE TOWN'S ARTIST AT LARGE


MONDAY IN THE PARK WITH MARLON
"A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE" WAS JUST SHOWN EN PLEIN AIR IN BRYANT PARK, AND EVERYONE SEEMED TO HAVE AN OPINION ABOUT BRANDO.
JAMES MARSHALL HARRIS:
WHO COMMANDS WHAT HE COMMANDS? HE GIVES MINUTES FOR MILLIONS.
CHESTER LOWENTHAL:
HE IS SUCH A GREAT PERFORMER THAT I DON'T THINK HE CAN DO ANYTHING BAD.
MEREDITH OCHS:
IT'S NOSTALGIC FOR ME BECAUSE MY FIRST BOYFRIEND LOOKED LIKE A VERY YOUNG MARLON BRANDO.
MAZZUCCHELLI

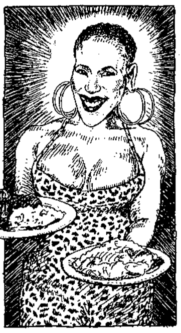
the series wasn't over. I often fell asleep during the season watching videotapes of games—trying to see how one team worked its power play or killed penalties, or what you could pick up about the habits of certain players—and I thought that's what I had done, and that I had to get up and watch more tape. Not until I had sat up in bed and thought it through did I convince myself it was over.

"I walk into the practice rink now and I see the banner flying there saying 'Home of the Rangers, Stanley Cup Champions,' and I realize we *are* champs, and I think what we really want is just to have fun playing the game. The curse is gone. Always in New York we were trying to rent winners, and now we are winners ourselves.

"The other day, though, I came to the rink and the guy who answers the phones said, 'I've only been here two years, and you're the fourth coach I've worked for.' And in the past three seasons they had two first-place teams and a championship, so you wonder, Geez, what are the expectations? As a head coach you're certain to get fired, and when you win, you're only delaying the inevitable."

TOU-TOU-TOUKIE, HELLO

TOUKIE SMITH, who is the owner, the maître d', and more or less the chef behind Toukie's, the new restaurant on West Houston Street, has a big voice and a big smile and big earrings and a big body, all of which, in her unbridled enthusiasm for things quintessentially Toukie—"meeting and greeting and eating, darling"—she has poured into her new venture. Toukie's menu is one of the most autobiographical we have ever seen—offerings include "My My Those Fries," "Honey That House Salad," and "Black Bottom Pie."

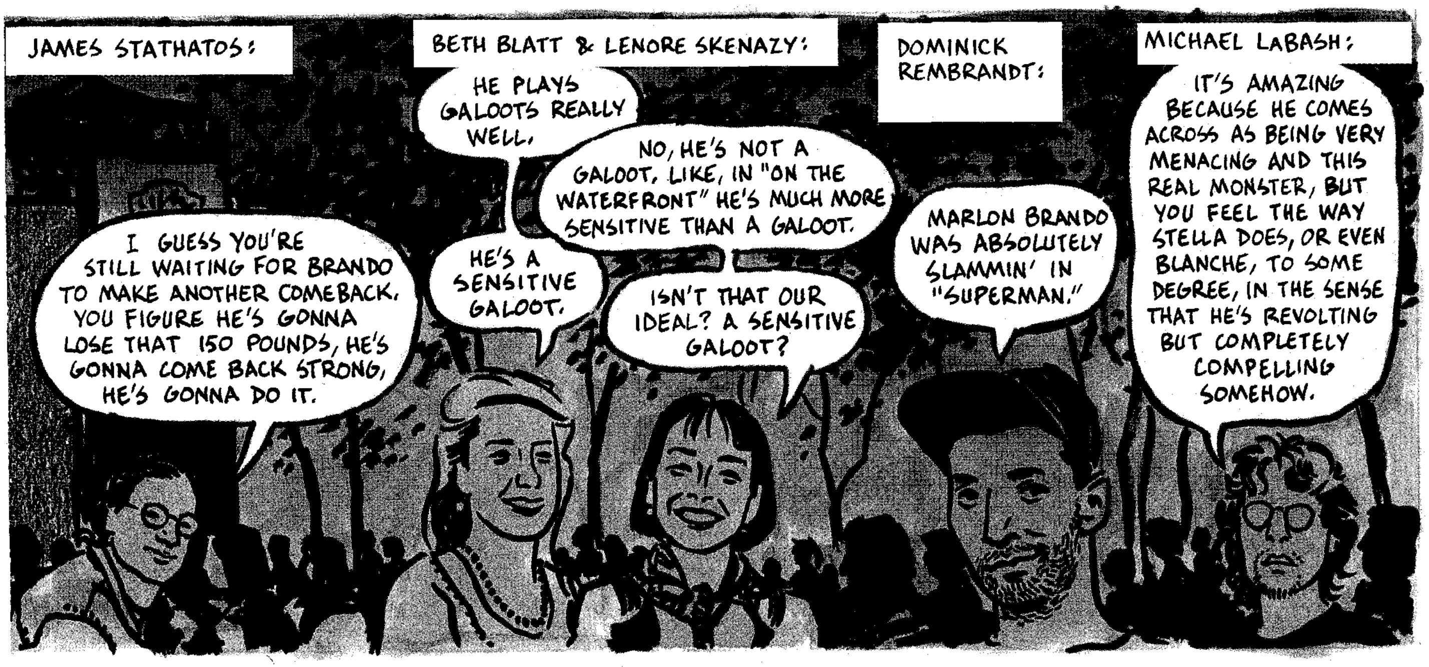


Operating in a manner more animated than that of the still model she was known as in the mid-seventies (when she was a muse to the artist Jean-Paul Goude *before* Grace Jones, the photographer Guy Bourdin, and the designer Issey Miyake), Toukie says, by way of greeting, "Give me some sugar, baby," followed, whether she knows you or not, by a kiss and a hug. Sometimes she says, "Give me some sugar *now*, before you try my biscuits, girlfriend," regardless of gender. At Toukie's, Toukie follows everything her patrons do (ordering a drink, finishing dinner) with applause or a hug or a kiss—a red, red kiss.

Red, which is Toukie's preferred color and is generally present on some aspect of her person at all times (nails, dress, bracelets, lips), is also the color of the leather banquettes at Toukie's—a low-ceilinged, dimly lit room with about twenty-four tables. And it is also the color of a boldly painted mural on one of the restaurant's walls, an image that includes her ninety-four-year-old grandmother Gladys, Elizabeth Taylor, and Dorothy Dandridge. They are all women whom Toukie admires, because, she says, "they were *always* real, giving back to the people. Which is a very real reality."

The number of very real realities Toukie has had to contend with in recent years include the death, from AIDS, of her brother, the designer Willi Smith; the end of her long-term relationship with Robert De Niro ("Oh, child, please"); the end of her modelling career ("Girlfriend, the industry is not ready for me loving my 34D-cup-size self"); the current return, in the fashion industry, to seventies glamour ("Darling, nothing is as fierce as I was back then, going to Tokyo to smile, to Paris to smile, to Milan to smile. You can't duplicate that innocent energy now; we know too much"); and the establishment, in honor of her brother, of a foundation to promote AIDS awareness in inner-city high schools and hospitals across the country. "I tell my kids to look it straight in the eye—and then *avoid* it."

The last time we had seen Toukie, she was dining out with Robert De Niro. She'd kept urging Mr. De Niro to eat, demonstrating the delectability of his food by eating half of it herself. When we recently saw her again, after what had been a long time, candlelight bounced off of her double row of enormous silver earrings, her forearms were covered


JAMES STATHATOS:
I GUESS YOU'RE STILL WAITING FOR BRANDO TO MAKE ANOTHER COMEBACK. YOU FIGURE HE'S GONNA LOSE THAT 150 POUNDS, HE'S GONNA COME BACK STRONG, HE'S GONNA DO IT.
BETH BLATT & LENORE SKENAZY:
HE PLAYS GALOOTS REALLY WELL.
NO, HE'S NOT A GALOOT. LIKE, IN "ON THE WATERFRONT" HE'S MUCH MORE SENSITIVE THAN A GALOOT.
HE'S A SENSITIVE GALOOT.
ISN'T THAT OUR IDEAL? A SENSITIVE GALOOT?
DOMINICK REMBRANDT:
MARLON BRANDO WAS ABSOLUTELY SLAMMIN' IN "SUPERMAN."
MICHAEL LABASH:
IT'S AMAZING BECAUSE HE COMES ACROSS AS BEING VERY MENACING AND THIS REAL MONSTER, BUT YOU FEEL THE WAY STELLA DOES, OR EVEN BLANCHE, TO SOME DEGREE, IN THE SENSE THAT HE'S REVOLTING BUT COMPLETELY COMPELLING SOMEHOW.

in beaded bracelets, and her red lips were moist. "I'm just loving this," she told us. "I'm just loving all this *life*."

INSIDE DOPE

MARIJUANA telephone delivery services, one of Manhattan's more creative cottage industries, are swelling in numbers and adapting to changing times. "I'm not one of those beeper people," Betty told us, with a moue of distaste. "That's so eighties. Like I remember when people would charge deliveries to a credit card." Betty, a trim, alert young woman with the sultry baby face of a blond Betty Boop (whose name we have given her), told us, "I operate on a friendly level with people I know. There are no wild cards. I keep well below the radar."

Keeping below the radar was unfortunately never an aptitude of the industry's pioneer, Mickey Cesar, the self-anointed Pope of Pot. Cesar got into marijuana sales and "green Communism" in Amsterdam in the seventies and arrived on the Lower East Side in 1979. He opened his first telephone delivery service in a First Street storefront, was arrested in 1981, served eight months, and quickly started up again a few blocks uptown. "There were six or seven telephones in a line, and a couple of people he had hired to take the orders, and five to ten delivery people," a sometime employee recalled.

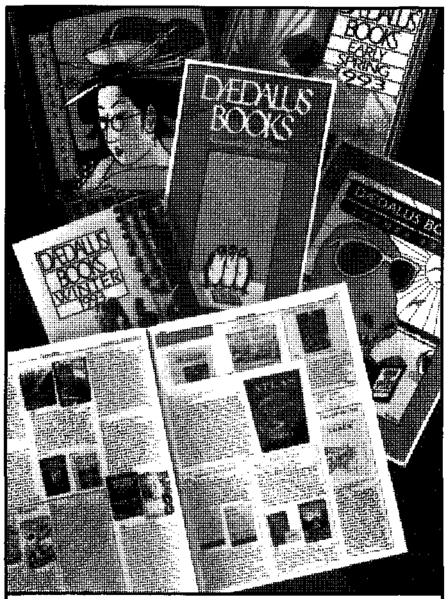
In 1985, after another stint in jail, Cesar reopened, this time with a toll-free number, 1-800 WANT POT, which he announced on a radio show. That was asking for trouble, and Cesar was back in the pen soon enough. He is now in the hospital and is fighting extradition to New Jersey, a fight he will probably win, if only because he is dying of cancer. As for the industry he pioneered, it is booming. "I would say at least a third of the delivery services are people who used to work for Mickey," one distributor told us. "Either they took his list or they just decided to branch out on their own." Some distributors have been nearly as overt as the Pope—Weedy, for instance, named for the business cards he used to hand out to likely-looking types in clubs and bars. All the cards had printed on them was "WE DELIVER" and a telephone number.

Things are now more sober, so to speak. You telephone whatever number you have acquired. "You tell them who you got the number from," somebody who has tried many services said. "They may say they'd rather deal with that person directly, or they may say, 'Cool.' You say, 'What have you got?' They say, 'Mexican' or 'Colombian'—whatever—and what the delivery charge is." The distributors' main fear is not of the police, since they feel that the N.Y.P.D., unless it is actively provoked, has more pressing matters on its mind, such as the recent death, by overdose, of twelve heroin users in five days. The danger is more that the marijuana dealers themselves are essentially noncriminal types working with, and being preyed upon by, much more predatory creatures. "I don't have to buy from really heavy-duty people," Betty told us. "Neither does the woman I buy from. But the man she buys from does. He does the dangerous work. *He* must deal with the Rastafarians with machine guns."

There are now upward of a hundred delivery services in Manhattan, according to one distributor. He told us that a delivery person is likely to make between fifty and a hundred dollars a day, while the people running the operation pull in between four hundred and a thousand. It is in keeping with the times that this distributor himself makes a special run to hospitals to provide half-ounce marijuana cookies, at seventy-five dollars apiece, to people with AIDS. "It helps with the aftereffects of the drugs," he said. "It's practically nonprofit—I make twenty dollars."

One breezy Upper East Side distributor also has a philosophical attitude toward his métier. "This shouldn't be your living," he said. "If it is, you're approaching it the wrong way. My friends and I like marijuana. We have seen friends destroyed by coke and heroin. Some are dead. But the business has to be conducted with . . . decorum."

Decorum aside, Mickey Cesar would approve. ♦



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ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

THE $64,000 QUESTION

Thirty-five years after the quiz-show scandal, a group of network executives consider the question: Is television still cheating?

BY KEN AULETTA

FILIP PAGOWSKI

WHEN Charles Van Doren was about to be exposed for his role in the nineteen-fifties quiz-show scandal, Albert Freedman, the associate producer of the show "Twenty-One," tried to comfort him by saying, "Besides, what did you do wrong? Everybody knows the magician doesn't saw the lady in half." That bit of dialogue is from the movie "Quiz Show," which was directed by Robert Redford and has just opened this week. (Terrence Rafferty's review appears on page 102.) Redford got the idea of making the movie from a chapter of Richard N. Goodwin's memoir "Remembering America: A Voice from the Sixties." It was Goodwin who, in 1959, working as an investigator for a congressional committee on legislative oversight, goaded Congress into holding hearings on the quiz-show scandal. The hearings embarrassed the television networks and disgraced Van Doren, the scion of a distinguished literary family, who at the time he appeared on "Twenty-One" was a lecturer in English at Columbia University.

Redford sees his film as "a parable" of what he calls "the eternal struggle between ethics and capitalism." Although the ardor that Americans feel for their television sets has not cooled over the past forty-five years of the medium's life, Redford believes that the quiz-show scandal robbed America of its innocence, and to test his ideas he screened "Quiz Show" a few weeks ago for a potentially hostile audience of some twenty former and current network executives. The movie was shown at a private screening room on West Fifty-fourth Street, and afterward Robert Batscha, the president of the Museum of Television & Radio, moderated a discussion. Redford, wearing a tan double-breasted jacket and a blue denim shirt, his reddish-blond hair thick and untamed, arrived just moments before the discussion began.

Several of the guests said that they thought the movie took too many liberties with the known facts. Merryle (Bud) Rukeyser, who joined NBC as a junior public-relations aide in 1958 and had risen to executive vice-president of communications by the time he retired, in 1990, was the first to speak. Rukeyser said he did not believe that NBC executives like Robert Kintner, the network's president at the time of the scandal, knew of the fraud, as the movie suggests. In the movie, an executive with Geritol, the sponsor of "Twenty-One," phones Kintner to say that Geritol is getting tired of Herbert Stempel. The show's ratings had begun to falter when Stempel, a nerdy, chubby-cheeked twenty-nine-year-old graduate student from Queens, continued to win week after week and began to grate on the viewers. After the call from the Geritol executive, Kintner phones Dan Enright, the show's producer, and tells him, "Just make the guy happy. You're a producer, Dan. Produce." Enright then tells Albert Freedman, "Herbie's dead." Rukeyser didn't believe that such dialogue could be real. If Kintner and NBC had known that the quiz shows were rigged, they would never have sent just a single junior aide to Washington to monitor the 1959 congressional hearings, according to Rukeyser, who was in fact the aide sent to Washington. It was a more innocent time, he said.

Fred Friendly, the former president of CBS News and a longtime producer for Edward R. Murrow, rose from a front-row seat and declared that it didn't really matter whether the fifties were a more innocent time, because the issues raised by the movie have endured. "This movie is all about ethics," he said. Friendly suggested that in pursuit of ratings and profits the networks cared too little about quality and about their public obligation to inform. He recalled sitting in a CBS control room with Murrow and watching the first broadcast of "The $64,000 Question," on CBS. It was a Tuesday at 10 P.M., and Murrow's "See It Now" followed at ten-thirty. "In the middle of the quiz show," Friendly said, "Murrow turned to me and said, 'Fritzo'—he always called me Fritzo—'how long do you think we'll stay in this time period?' Ed knew then we would lose our time period, from ten-thirty to eleven o'clock on Tuesday night, because this time period would be so expensive and so good for CBS that the best that Murrow could do was not good enough, because the money would be there"—for the quiz show. "And that's the problem today."

A virtue of Redford's movie is that it examines both the black-and-white aspects of ethics and the murky gray areas. And so in the movie Redford mischievously shows the investigator, Goodwin, coaching Herbert Stempel on the answers he should give when he testifies before Congress. "You answer yes," Goodwin tells Stempel at one point.

"You're worse than Enright," Stempel replies.

Whenever the movie focusses on Van Doren and Goodwin and Stempel, it treats them as nuanced human beings. But other characters in the film—network officials, producers, advertisers, public officials—are sketched less fully. This bothered many guests at the screening. Irwin Segelstein, who worked for an ad agency in the fifties before joining CBS and later becoming vice-chairman of NBC, said that the movie conveyed "a loaded depiction" of network schemers. "I don't think the people involved had the sense that they were doing something terrible," he said. The lapses kind of sneaked up on them, and "by degrees" they got "sucked into it," he went on. "In your opening scenes, they're already heavies, and they're heavies all the way to the end." To say that the quiz-show scandal represented an absence of ethics "is a little heavy," he added. "I mean, these are guys who hugged their children and kissed their wives and did good things."

Jerome Feniger, the managing director of the Station Representatives Association, didn't care whether or not the TV executives hugged their kids. "It is totally obvious to me, and I was there at the time, that everyone involved—the advertiser, the agency, and the producers—knew about it," he said. "So did the networks," he added.

A certain amount of cheating takes place in all entertainment, several speakers at the screening noted. They mentioned makeup, lighting, laugh tracks, wardrobes. Even Groucho Marx was fed jokes, Segelstein said.

The executives drifted into a discussion of how entertainment "dissembled," as opposed to "lied," and of all the difficult circumstances that network executives face. Delano E. Lewis, the fifty-five-year-old president of National Public Radio, who is one of the few African-American major communications executives, then declared, "This business that this is just entertainment, and we just slipped into this, just really misses the fact that the public believed this. Viewers make a mistake by thinking of the quiz-show scandal from the vantage point of network or advertising executives. It is a movie about ethics. Standards are absolutely needed, because people believe what they see and hear. And so, from the public's perspective, they don't understand what's going on. . . . They were really believing that people were answering questions and winning money."

Batscha, the moderator, asked if a similar scandal could happen today.

Stephen Weiswasser, the senior vice-president and general counsel of Capital Cities /ABC, who was perhaps fifteen years younger than most of the other guests at the screening, replied that the issues today "are a great deal more subtle, but they're the same issues, the same problems." He went on, "We would not have a quiz-show scandal or anything that looks like it. But we fight the same

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"Actually, I divorced him right after I fired him. God, it makes me feel better to talk this through."

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battles." The quiz-show scandal of the fifties, he said, happened "by degrees," not by edict.

"It was the environment that allowed that to happen," said Lawrence Grossman, a former president of NBC News, who was working in the advertising business and then at CBS during the fifties. The quest for ratings still prevails in television, he said. In fact, the situation may be worse today than it was nearly four decades ago, since the networks now face more strenuous competition and are even more desperate to find an audience.

Segelstein asked, "Do you really think these people come out unrehearsed on 'Oprah,' on 'Donahue'?" He noted that "What's My Line?" was organized and partly rehearsed before it was broadcast, and observed that Oprah Winfrey has her guests screened before they go on the show. "And, step by step, degree by degree, you wind up with a '$64,000 Question,' " he said.

CHEATING is certainly not restricted to television. Weiswasser said that Redford himself seemed to be cheating, since he could not have known of the conversations that his movie shows between Charles and his father, the poet Mark Van Doren, or between the younger Van Doren and Robert Kintner, or between Kintner and Enright, the producer. Nor is there more than circumstantial evidence that, as the film suggests, Judge Mitchell Schweitzer, of Manhattan, conspired with Enright to suppress the findings of a grand jury that investigated the quiz shows after Herbert Stempel, enraged at being replaced by Van Doren, reported the fraud to Frank Hogan, the Manhattan District Attorney. Nor is there any proof that Judge Schweitzer telephoned Enright (as the movie shows him doing) to alert him. Yet real people are portrayed, and words and actions are attributed to them—a now common practice of docudramas, from ABC's "The Final Days" and HBO's "Barbarians at the Gate" to Oliver Stone's "JFK."

"There's nothing wrong with docudrama, I think, so long as newspeople don't do it," said Reuven Frank, a former NBC News president and a producer of the Huntley-Brinkley news show. " 'Julius Caesar' is a docudrama." The networks had always been in the "business of assembling audiences," Frank said, and there was nothing inherently corrupt about that. News and commerce have always been at odds, and compromises have always been made, he went on, but these compromises are "something quite different from knowingly lying to millions of people week after week."

Redford himself complained to me of docudramas and tabloid journalism, "The danger with all of this is that the truth gets futzed around so much that people will accept fiction as fact." Yet in "Quiz Show" he feels free to fictionalize real people in the name of art.

Weiswasser asked Redford, "How much of the movie that you put on the screen reflects true reality and fact? How much of it is for dramatic effect?"

Redford conceded that "license was taken" in the making of the movie—"dramatic license, to make either a moral point or an ethical point and not move too far out of what could possibly have happened." He acknowledged later that he had telescoped three years of quiz-show scandals into one year, and that "there's editorializing there between what took place on 'The $64,000 Question' and what took place on 'Twenty-One.' " For dramatic impact, Goodwin performs a more important role in the movie than he actually did in cracking the case. Redford did not apologize for taking liberties, because, he said, he had tried "to elevate something so that people can see it." He went on, "Otherwise, you might as well have a documentary. And there has been a documentary on this subject, and I think quite a good one." He was referring to Julian Krainin's "The Quiz Show Scandal," produced for public television in 1992. (Krainin is listed as a producer of Redford's movie.) In fairness, Redford's movie does stick to the essential truth of what happened.

While Redford grapples with ethical dilemmas in an often thoughtful fashion, he does sometimes succumb to Oliver Stonism—the notion that evil acts are the result of a conspiracy, plotted and executed with precision by brilliant but corrupt men. The weakness of this notion is that it assumes more intelligence than most of us possess. It assumes that most scandals stem from cool cunning, not egotism, stupidity, or whim. The truth is that people—including business executives and politicians—are usually ruled by more than a single emotion or

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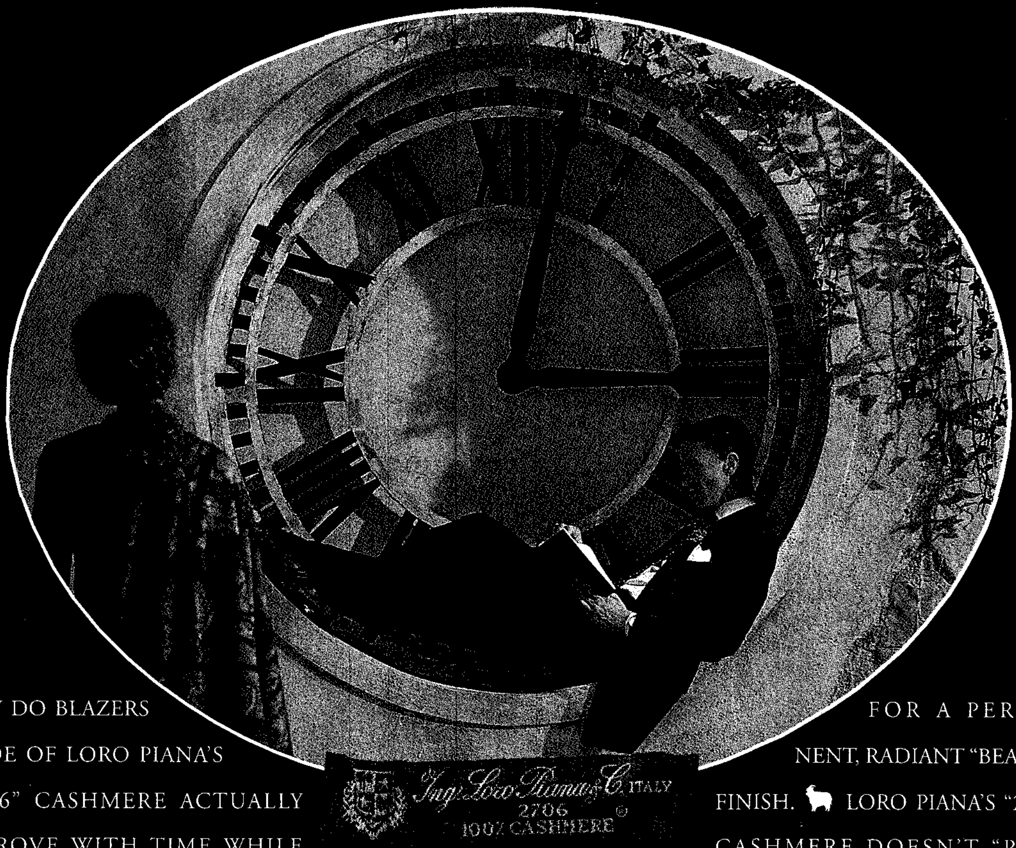
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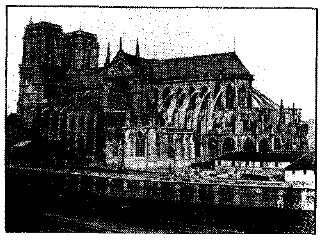

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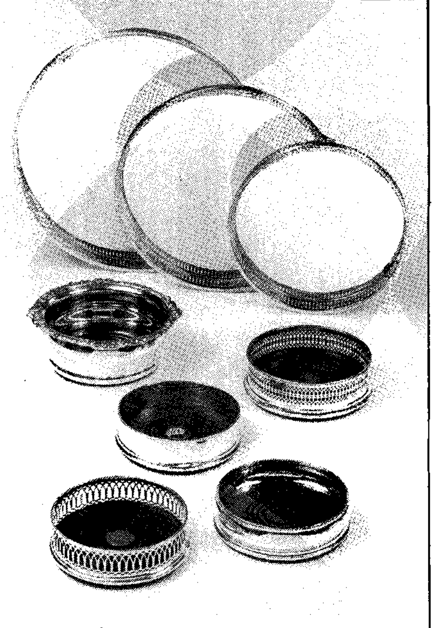

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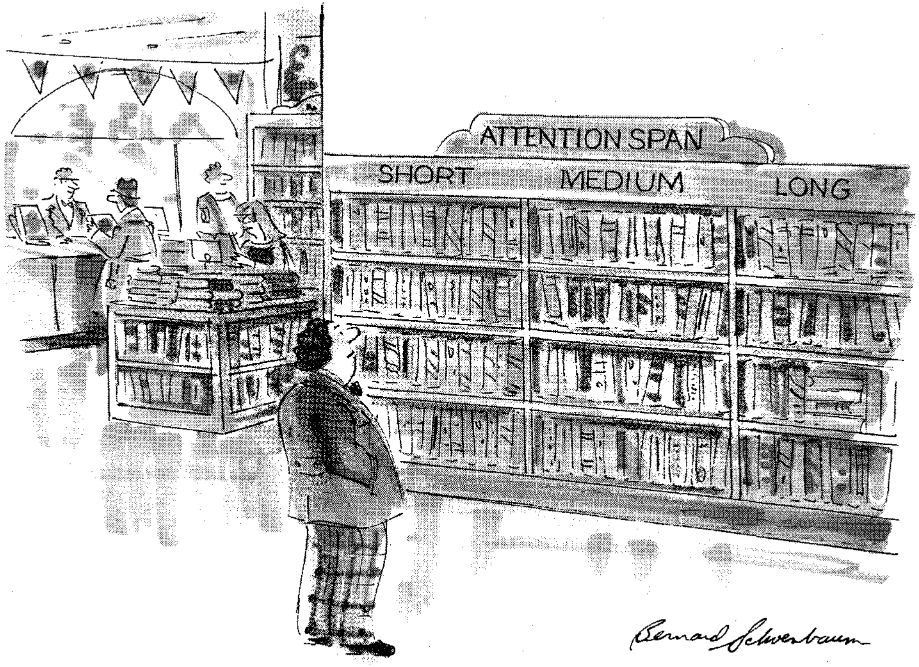
ambition. In the quiz-show scandal, Van Doren was a liar, a self-confessed perjurer. But Redford allows us to see him as more than that. And Kintner and the producers and the advertising executives were more than just hungry for ratings, though they were rapacious. A fuller portrait of Kintner, for example, would have shown that, while he was by most accounts a tyrant, he did care more about the News Division than about the Entertainment Division. Kintner was, in fact, the architect of NBC News and the nightly Huntley-Brinkley newscast. Frank Stanton, the president of CBS at the time, who took the quiz shows off the air when the fraud first surfaced, was, and is, a man of enormous personal rectitude.

The more complex truth may be that Kintner and the others were less sinister than "Quiz Show" suggests—that they were just panicky executives, determined to win the ratings contest at all costs, because their jobs hinged on the outcome. Certainly Kintner and NBC did little to investigate early allegations of fraud. Although NBC announced in the fall of 1958 that its own "investigation had proved Stempel's charges to be utterly baseless and untrue," to arrive at this conclusion NBC had merely relied on assurances from the producers of "Twenty-One" that there was no fraud.

Does television *still* cheat? Does it camouflage or manipulate the truth for the sake of ratings and profits? While there are no more rigged quiz shows, all three networks have cut corners by using sensationalized—and even faked—car crashes for dramatic impact. And, of course, questionable car crashes are not far removed from another form of cheating: blurring the line between what is real and what is not through the dramatic reënactment by a news broadcast of a scene in which actors are substituted for real people and dialogue is invented. This practice is much more common on syndicated tabloid news shows than at the networks. For example, in February, Fox's "A Current Affair"—the father of the tabloid news shows—used actors to simulate unproved claims of child molestation which a thirteen-year-old boy had lodged against the singer Michael Jackson. But blurring the lines of truth does sometimes occur on the networks, too, even if they are less blatant about it. Earlier this year, ABC's "Turning Point" used a "point of view" camera to reënact the Charles Manson clan's approach to the site of their murder rampage, and last year the network's "20/20" used the same technique to portray Lorena Bobbitt's frantic flight from her home after she amputated her husband's penis.

Tabloid TV lowers standards in other ways. There are firms that make it their business to track true-life crime and horror tales and tip off news organizations for a fee. The blonder or the prettier or the more articulate the survivors of the crimes or the horrors are, the more intense is the bidding war to capture their



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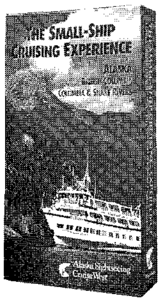
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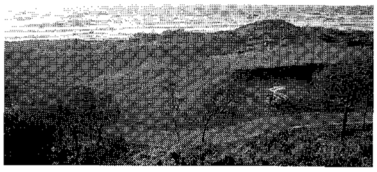

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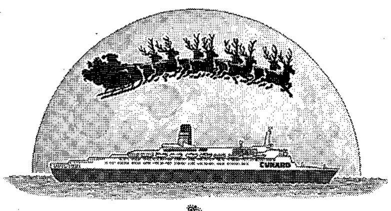

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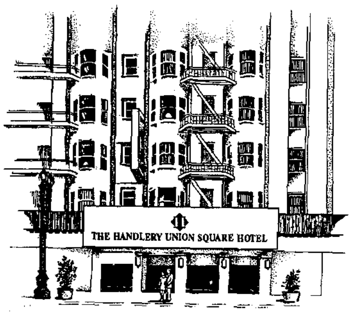
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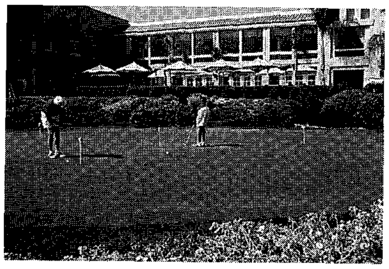

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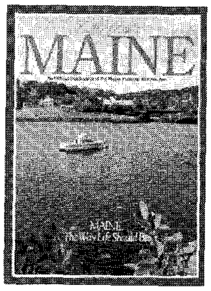

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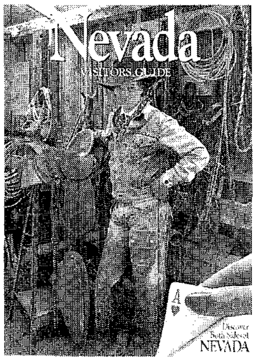

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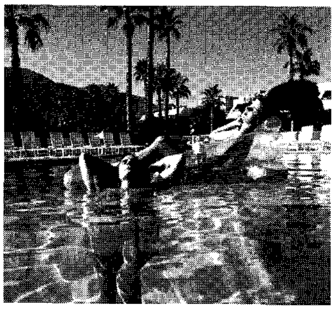

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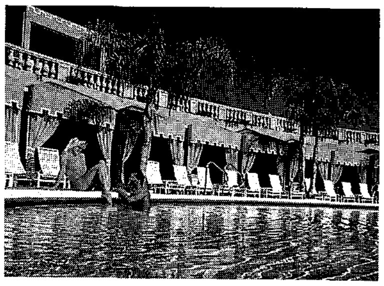

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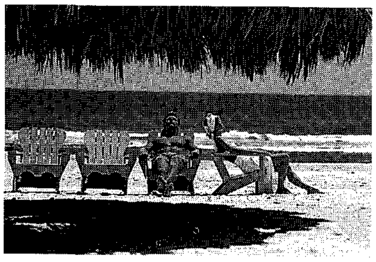

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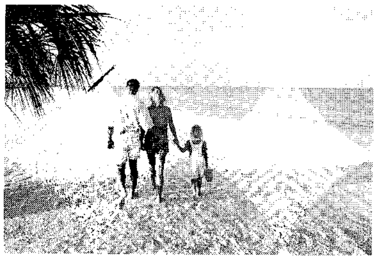

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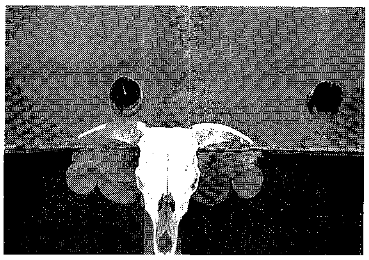

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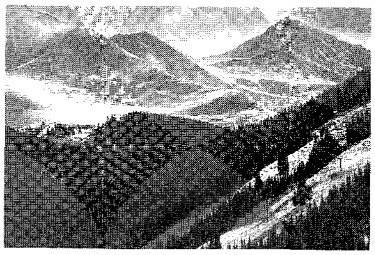

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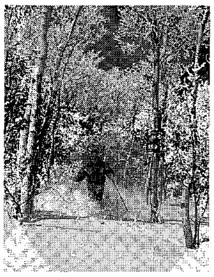

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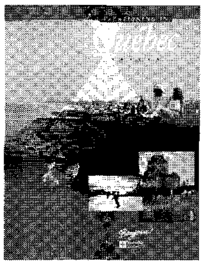

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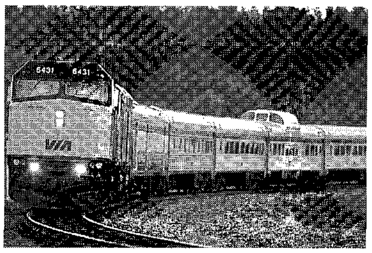

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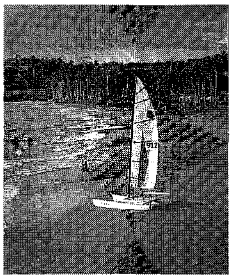

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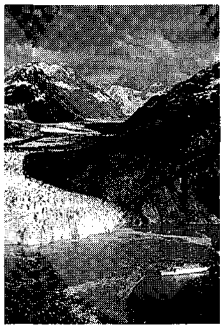

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story. The practice of paying for interviews invites cheating, since people have an incentive to embellish their tales in order to reap the rewards. Those who confess to Geraldo Rivera that they slept with their mother, or tell Oprah Winfrey why they swapped spouses, or confide to "Hard Copy" why they found murder thrilling, are often coaxed in much the same way that Charles Van Doren was when Freedman, the associate producer, told him that he was elevating the image of intellectuals. A recent cover story, "Tabloid TV's Blood Lust," in *U.S. News & World Report* noted, "The 'public service' argument is often invoked by television producers, who sometimes persuade people to 'go public' by telling them that to do so will help others in similar circumstances." Guests are often encouraged to punch up their responses, to be brief, to stress certain points; people are urged to get in touch with the show if, say, they have been raped by a parent. "They try to make the shows more interesting," Irwin Segelstein said. "Is that the same as coaching? I don't know. But it's not what meets the eye. It's easy to slip into these things because you're in show business."

TELEVISION has always danced with the show-business devil. The need for pictures can distort judgments about what is news and what is not, what is best for the viewer and what is not. And the success of a show like "Victory at Sea" owed much to sometimes soaring, sometimes sombre background music. Before *People* and "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," Edward R. Murrow was the host of the weekly "Person to Person," asking his celebrity guests, "What was the biggest thrill of your career?" The search for likable personalities and attractive faces yielded first Charles Van Doren on "Twenty-One" and then, years later, Phyllis George as co-host of the "CBS Morning News." The most successful television show in history—"60 Minutes"—owes much to tenacious reporting and good writing and much to entertainment values as well. "In a way, '60 Minutes' is a Western," the late esteemed CBS producer Burton Benjamin declared in 1987. "It began with two guys in the white hats—Mike Wallace and Harry Reasoner—pursuing the black hats and prevailing. The black hats were thieves, rip-off artists, dishonest politicians, corporations involved in hanky-panky, labor unions that were doing some unpleasant things, and so forth. '60 Minutes' rarely, if ever, dealt with matters like arms control or the budget deficit. It dealt with 'stories' and good guys and bad guys most of the time."

Television's greatest distortions may occur on the talk shows. "It's unfortunate, in a way, what the talk shows and the talk-show culture . . . have done to the business of writing," the writer Wendy Kaminer said on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's excellent documentary "Talk Television" earlier this year. "You can't write a serious book anymore. Anybody who writes a nonfiction book that has any kind of social criticism or political commentary has to be prepared to go on talk shows, and you have to be able to reduce the book to a series of twenty- or thirty-second sound bites." The need to compress answers for reasons of time and drama, coupled with news-discussion shows like "The McLaughlin Group" and "Crossfire" and "Capital Gang," raises the decibel level of American politics. The common and false presumption of these shows is that most public-policy questions fall into a liberal or a conservative box—into yes-or-no answers.

Distortion inevitably creeps into news. Presidential candidates are reduced to an average sound bite of about eight seconds on the evening news. Serious producers and correspondents, sometimes without realizing it, encourage those they interview to rush—to give them a sharp sound bite. "Ratings are the scorecard," David Bartlett, the president of the Radio-Television News Directors Association, told an Alfred I. DuPont–Columbia University Forum last January. Commenting on the outburst of tabloidlike "magazine" shows, the current NBC News president, Andrew Lack, told the same forum, "We got too good at producing the hooks, and unfortunately the audience took the bait."

Thirty-five years after the quiz-show scandal, the proliferation of channel choices has produced another form of cheating, brought on by the need to keep costs down. Since the mid-nineteen-eighties, the three networks have reduced the number and size of their overseas news bureaus, and have relied increasingly on news services to supply them with pictures. Despite the fact that

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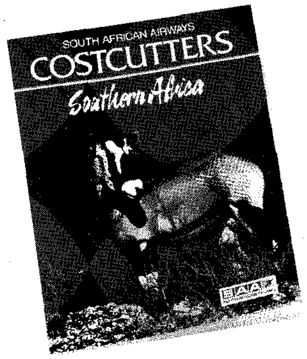

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the networks identify such borrowed footage, viewers may assume that the network had a reporter on the scene when in fact it did not. A confection of news-service pictures and a voice-over from a network correspondent who sits in Washington substitutes for on-site reporting. The network has "covered" the story but not reported it. "I was asked to do Somalia for the weekend news and I've never been to Somalia," the CBS correspondent Martha Teichner told the *Columbia Journalism Review* in 1992. She did do some research on Somalia, Teichner said, and she added, "Even if I'm correct and accurate, I'm superficial."

In many ways, the cost accountants are also responsible for the glut of network magazine news shows, with their racy fare. Since these hour-long broadcasts are cheaper to produce than an entertainment program, and since the networks own them and can sell or rebroadcast them, the network owners use "news as a quick fix for their other problems and in the bargain produce little more than a carrousel of look-alike magazines and look-alike talk shows that follow each other like circus elephants." So warned Don Hewitt, the "60 Minutes" founder and executive producer, in an address he delivered at the Edinburgh Film Festival in August of 1993. Hewitt spoke about the surfeit of network magazine shows, and outlined a boundary between legitimate dramatization and cheating: "There is . . . a line that separates show biz from news biz. The trick is to walk up to it, touch it with your toe, but don't cross it."

The needs of commerce affect standards in other ways. Local newscasts do promotional stories about the networks' latest made-for-TV movies—"the big shill factor," the *Newsday* TV writer Verne Gay has called it. Sneaker manufacturers pay all the members of a basketball team for wearing their footwear. A weekly syndicated show, "Main Floor," took viewers into department stores and charged advertisers roughly twenty-five thousand dollars for a two-to-three-minute segment in the program—without telling viewers that they were watching a commercial. Viewers are meant to think that the half-hour "infomercials" they watch are not produced by a sponsor. To convey a sense that viewers were watching a newscast, the Collagen Corporation hired Kathleen Sullivan, a former newscaster, to hawk its skin-care product by promising an "exclusive, in-depth analysis" of how to treat damaged skin.

Relaxed federal TV regulations now permit the networks to own and sell more of their own programs. Thus the networks have a financial incentive for putting on their own shows (as opposed to those made by independent production companies) and reserving for their own shows the plum spots on the evening schedule, as ABC did last season, when it broadcast Ed Asner's "Thunder Alley" immediately after "Home Improvement," television's reigning ratings champ. A similar inspiration has struck four of the largest record companies: the Warner Music Group, Sony Music, EMI Music, and PolyGram have joined forces to create a music-video cable channel to compete with MTV. To try to lessen the risk of capitalism and guarantee the distribution of their product, Hollywood studios are seeking to merge with CBS, NBC, and ABC. These moves arouse the same antitrust worry: Will the distributor give a fair shot to competitors? Or will the distributor cheat the customer, as supermarkets sometimes do, by refusing to display the products of certain competitors? The much ballyhooed convergence of once distinct industries—telephone and cable and broadcast and movie and publishing and computer software and hardware companies—will accelerate this trend, as partners scramble to scratch one another's backs.

The ethical dimensions of these nineteen-nineties issues are more subtle than the ones of the nineteen-fifties, but they are no less vital. Today's "scandals" may be different from the scandal that occurred when Charles Van Doren was slipped the answers on a quiz show. There are two notable differences between then and now: Today's lapses don't result in felony charges, as Van Doren's did when he lied to a grand jury (after deceiving viewers). And the nature of the ardor that Americans feel for television has changed, because the outrage that the quiz-show scandal provoked does seem to be a relic of a more innocent time. In the nearly four decades since that scandal, television has succeeded, by degrees, in numbing our sense of outrage. We remain married to the TV set, but we seem to expect, and tolerate, cheating. ♦

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HOLMES ON THE CASE

The English literary sleuth Richard Holmes has reinterpreted one of Samuel Johnson's "Lives"—and landed at the forefront of the battle of the new biography.

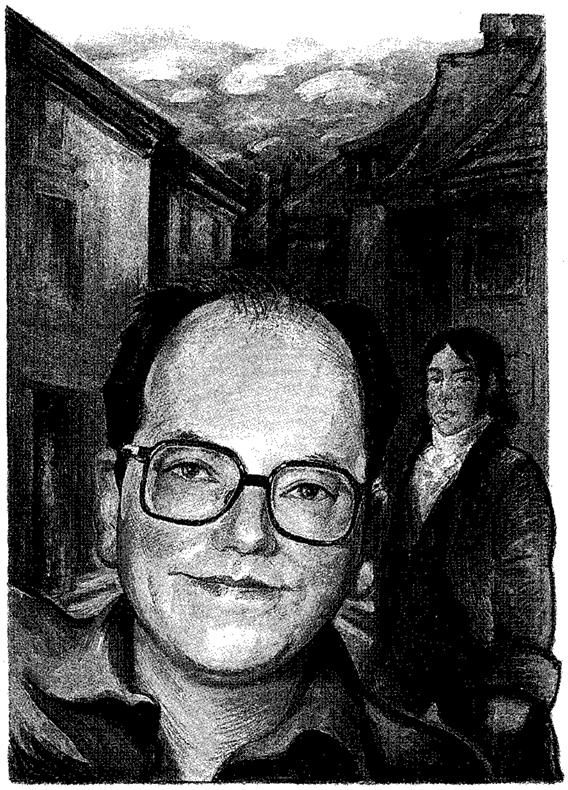
BY JAMES ATLAS

THE most eye-catching contributor's note in the recent biography issue of *Granta* is surely the following: "Richard Holmes's *Coleridge: Early Visions* was Whitbread Book of the Year in 1990. Since being rescued from the North Sea by an RAF Sea King helicopter last summer he has continued to work on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century lives." A very Holmesian touch: at once enigmatic and mythologizing. It makes you want to read *his* biography.

Holmes has enjoyed a loyal audience ever since he published his huge and definitive biography of Shelley, in 1974, at the age of twenty-eight. ("And *have* you seen Richard Holmes's eight-hundred-page 'Shelley: The Pursuit'?" Dwight Macdonald wrote me when it came out, recommending books to emulate. "I'm halfway through and I feel like a wasp drowning in honey.") "Footsteps," published eleven years later, is Holmes's account of how he came to write his books; it has become a kind of minor classic. He has been a notoriously elusive figure, however, not easily flushed from hiding. When I first read about his rescue at sea, with its Shelleyan echo—the poet drowned in a sailing mishap—I wondered if it was an invention of Bill Buford, the editor of *Granta*, whose "Notes on Contributors" are said to be composed over drinks at the Groucho Club late at night.

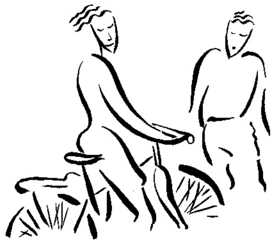
The part about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century lives, at least, was true. The article in *Granta* concerned a little-known episode in the life of Boswell, and Holmes's "Dr. Johnson & Mr. Savage" (just out here from Pantheon) was warmly reviewed in England, where it was on the short list for another Whitbread. He's now at work on the second volume of "Coleridge." A Holmes revival—if the word can be applied to a writer not yet fifty—is under way. His London agent, David Godwin, has negotiated a lucrative three-book contract for "J. & S." (as Holmes refers to the new book), the sequel to "Early Visions," and a collection of essays; in England, HarperCollins is planning to reissue all three of Holmes's previous books. "A master-biographer," "a virtuoso literary sleuth"—such encomiums are now routine. Paul Johnson, not an easy man to please, has called Holmes "our most original and resourceful literary biographer."

Holmes's arrival at the threshold of preëminence can be attributed to his erudition and his grace of style—to the



At times, Holmes seems to become his subject: when writing "Shelley," he dated a check 1772.

TOM LUEVICH



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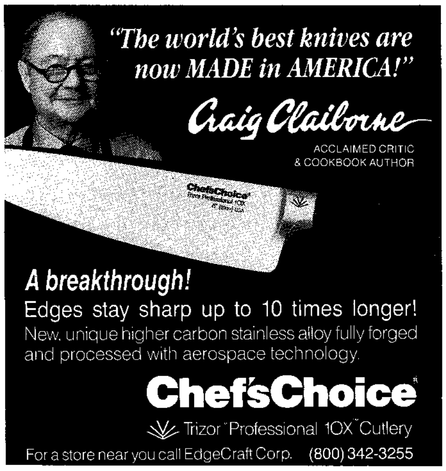

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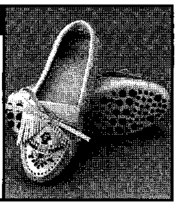

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(*Error in the printing of the line "My soul is a lighthouse keeper," by an unknown female poet.*)

Bored with the high drama of watching,
I see myself bound always to your absence,
sending out my pure circle of light so you
will know where I am, and how close
you might come to disaster. Imagine, love,
the tedium of this watch. On almost every day
nothing happens. And isn't it wrong to yearn
for a great storm just to feel important?
I'll let you go, then. Why shouldn't my house
be my own, and my soul its keeper?
This work I needn't take so seriously
since I've learned what pleases me, the light
of late afternoon through that window,
the intricate cobwebs I won't disturb.
I know you don't want to think of me
not always thinking of you, brave and imperilled.
I'm sure you'll write to say: *How can you change*
so completely? You're not the woman
I thought I knew. And I'm not,
but understand, dear, it wasn't such a great change.
Imagine you could have seen that side of me
at the beginning, when we walked
for hours along the shore, and you were so certain
I was yours just because you loved me.

—LAWRENCE RAAB

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sheer elegance of his work. His biographies are beautifully structured and paced; they're *written.* The reader sinks into his narrative as if into a dream. The endless detail, instead of overwhelming us, has an almost incantatory effect. Characters who have been dead for hundreds of years rise before us like apparitions: Coleridge in Dorothy Wordsworth's garden at Dove Cottage, drinking tea in the moonlight; Shelley declaiming to his friend Hogg, "without order, and with his natural vehemence and volubility." Holmes's paragraphs teem with life, like a cell culture on a microscope slide. The footnotes, brimming with anecdotes that couldn't be crammed into the text, spill from page to page ("footnote continued overleaf"), each one threatening to become a book in itself.

Perhaps a handful of biographers—Michael Holroyd on Lytton Strachey, P. N. Furbank on Forster—can weave this spell, reconstructing a life through literary art and the stubborn accretion of fact. But Holmes goes further. I suspect that his current renown has a good deal to do with the provocative claims he makes on behalf of the form. In England—as here—there has been a flurry of debate lately about the whole biographical enterprise, with biographers aggressively pushing back the boundaries of tact, while literary executors and guardians of taste loudly execrate the trend. Andrew Motion's pitiless biography of Philip Larkin caused yelps of outrage. The poet had been "ambushed," Julian Barnes complained. Martin Amis, on the evidence of Motion's book, decided that biography was "a lowly trade." ("Someone's writing my father's biography," he muttered when I confronted him about the comment.) Literary journalists routinely invoke Joyce Carol Oates's by now famous term of reproach, "pathography," the chronicle of celebrated figures' sordid doings. In academic circles, meanwhile, theorists continue their busy assault on the validity of biographical evidence. Biography, it appears, can do no right.

The normally reticent Holmes entered the fray with an essay in the *Daily Telegraph* last winter defending his craft against the wave of "public castigation." The piece was vintage Holmes, utterly without rancor yet fiercely passionate on behalf of what he regards as biography's main virtue: "to celebrate the extraordinary diversity of human nature." For Holmes, biography is a vocation—a word that, with its sense of a religious calling, he often employs. "By reconstructing a life through narrative, it emphasises cause and consequence, the linked pattern of growth and change, the vivid story-line of individual responsibility and meaningful action," he wrote. The life informs the work—in some way *is* the work. In the *Telegraph* piece, Holmes quoted Larkin's observation that "a writer's reputation is twofold: what we think of his work, and what we think of him. What's more, we expect the two halves to relate: if they don't, then one or other of our opinions alter until they do." With Motion in hand, we see Larkin's cranky, bibulous ways, his defiant seediness, his misogyny looming before us on every page of his "Collected Poems."

Like other biographers who have tried to explain their art—notably Leon Edel—Holmes often deploys metaphors of combat in characterizing the complex relationship between biographer and subject; at times, he depicts biography as a "duel" of wills. And he can draw blood. The critic Peter Conrad, for one, has objected to Holmes's "Stracheyan diminution of his subject," calling his portrait of Shelley "a bitter anti-Romantic satire of predatory egotism, meanness, violence and hysterical petulance." But conciliation is more Holmes's game. For him, biography can also be "an extended conversation," "a handshake across time," even "a love affair." When he puts down his rapier, he's the most amiable of biographers.

I wasn't surprised to discover that he's also the most amiable of men. Arriving in London on a Sunday morning last spring, I heard the phone ring as I put down my bags in my room. "It's Richard," a genial voice said. "I know what it's like to arrive alone in a foreign city, and I'm calling to greet you."

Two days later, I visited Holmes in his "hidden aerie," as he likes to describe the North London apartment he has lived in since 1972. Walking up the street from the Tufnell Park subway station, I passed some dreary public housing (sign in a first-floor window: "Piss Off! I'm Having a Bad Day"), liquor stores, junk shops, and Indian restaurants. Holmes's apartment, just off the main street, was tiny—two small rooms and a kitchenette—and sparely furnished to the point of squalor: a worn carpet, ancient soiled pillows, a chair with the stuffing coming out. The chaise longue to which Holmes directed me was worn shiny. A light bulb hung from the ceiling. The whole place reminded me of his description of the shabby lodgings in Soho where Shelley sought refuge from his creditors. The only arresting detail in Holmes's refuge was a brass ship's barometer on the wall.

Evidence of the biographer's vocation was everywhere. In one corner stood a file cabinet; on the table was an electric typewriter; propped up on the mantel were several portraits of Coleridge. The walls of the bedroom were lined from floor to ceiling with bookshelves. Holmes keeps the overflow in a warehouse three miles away. "I've sometimes wondered if I ought to move to the storeroom," he told me. It was an apartment designed for working and sleeping in—alone. "My fridge is historically rather bare," he said, apologetically, rummaging for a bottle of milk. He has never married, but there has been a succession of girlfriends. Two of his books are dedicated to "Vicki"—the poet Vicki Feaver. "Dr. Johnson & Mr. Savage" is dedicated to "the Rose in the Grove"—the novelist Rose Tremain, with whom Holmes now "shares a life," as he puts it. Weekends are generally spent at her country house, in Norwich.

In appearance, Holmes is unprepossessing. The day we met, he was dressed in corduroys and a not entirely clean black shirt. Stout, partly bald, with glasses on a long aquiline nose, he radiated a gracious regard for his interlocutor combined with a powerful intelligence. But there was also a wariness about him—a hint of stifled conflict, of private struggles overcome and pushed beneath the surface. Being a subject doesn't entirely suit him, he confessed: "It's a very uneasy business." He prefers the role of the pursuer to that of the pursued.

His new book is about both. Richard Savage was an eighteenth-century poet of considerable renown in his time, a Delmore Schwartz figure who haunted the streets of London, sleeping on benches in St. James's Square or "in Cellars among the Riot and Filth of the meanest and most profligate of the Rabble," as Dr. Johnson put it. Claiming to be the illegitimate son of the aristocrats Lady Macclesfield and the fourth Earl Rivers, Savage created a stir by writing libellous pamphlets about his putative forebears. (He achieved his greatest notoriety when he was convicted of murder after an altercation in a tavern.) As a poet, he was uneven, to put it in the most charitable light. If Savage is thought of now, it's largely because of Dr. Johnson, who wrote him up in "Lives of the Poets." In this case, the biography is what has endured.

The main facts in "Dr. Johnson & Mr. Savage" have been available to previous biographers. What captured Holmes's imagination was the relationship between Savage and Johnson: the fact that the biographer actually knew his subject. When Savage goes off to a self-imposed exile in Wales, Johnson brings himself into the story, noting that Savage "parted from the author of this narrative with tears in his eyes." For Holmes, the personal encounter is key: Johnson's "Life of Savage" marks the emergence of "a new hybrid, nonfiction form" in which the biographer becomes a presence in his subject's chronology, and shapes it to his own literary ends. "In Johnson's hands, biography became a rival to the novel," Holmes writes, with the assertive brio that is his trademark. "It began to pose the largest, imaginative questions: how well can we know our fellow human beings; how far can we learn from someone else's struggles about the conditions of our own; what do the intimate circumstances of one particular life tell us about human nature in general?" What gives Holmes's own books their vibrancy is his investigative vigor, his willingness to peer behind the curtain. "How far can we know the person across the table?" he said to me as we talked in his apartment. "How far can we ever know anybody? How much is it possible to know?" By his own example, a great deal.

"I'd always wanted to write about eighteenth-century London," Holmes went on to say. "This had been in my notebook since 1984. I knew there was a story there, something about that friendship that was just so mysterious and touching. At first, I tried to write about it in the form of a play, a sort of triangular dialogue between young Johnson and old Savage and then old Johnson and young Boswell—to try to get a conversation going. I suppose it was an early, primitive form of my idea of looking at the biographic process. In 'Footsteps'—looking back at myself, the narrating character—I had found one way in, and I suppose I was looking around for some other way of going back to that idea, a slightly more objective way. I suddenly realized that if I wrote about a biographer writing about someone who's first of all his friend I could maybe get that same perspective."

Just as Johnson on Savage is also Johnson on Johnson—"the terrible solitude and gloom: that's really Johnson writing about himself"—so "Dr. Johnson & Mr. Savage" is also Holmes on Holmes. "There's a lot of Richard in his books," one of his editors remarked to me. Holmes agreed. "Biography works best when the biographer has found a subject that actually puts him *on guard* in the most extreme and delicate way—that, as it were, throws down a challenge. There's a kind of duel of wits, of imagination, which is often what gives a biography its excitement." "J. & S." is the triangular conversation that Holmes imagined—only, the third party is the biographer himself.

"THERE have been two Golden Ages of biography," Michael Holroyd told me. "Dr. Johnson is the first wave; Richard Ellmann's 'James Joyce' and Leon Edel's 'Henry James' inaugurate the second. At that point, you get almost a new genre of biography, scholarly and researched, but also written with great imagination and the kind of psychological acuity unavailable to Victorian biographers."

Holmes really belongs to a third wave, along with Peter Ackroyd ("Dickens"), Victoria Glendinning ("Anthony Trollope"), Hilary Spurling ("Paul Scott," "Ivy Compton-Burnett"), A. N. Wilson ("C. S. Lewis," "Tolstoy"), and Andrew Motion ("Philip Larkin" and, now, "Keats"). Mostly in their forties,

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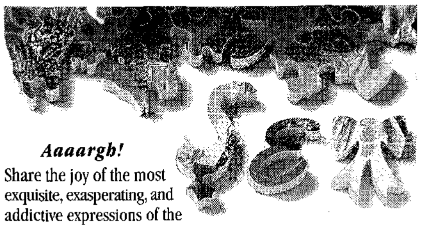

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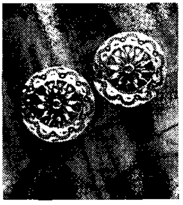

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they have staked out biography as a literary genre, producing books that are both definitive and delightfully readable. They bring to their work a kind of relaxed authority, eschewing the monumental in favor of what could be described as serious literary entertainment. But Holmes stands out from even this accomplished group; his archival rigor, combined with his interpretative gifts as a critic, give his work the high gloss of art. (If he ever finishes the second volume of "Coleridge," of course, it *will* be monumental.)

Richard Holmes was born on November 5, 1945—Guy Fawkes Day—and grew up in a big, comfortable eighteenth-century cottage on Romney Marsh, southeast of London. The family was "very plummy, haute bourgeois," Helen Rogan, an early girlfriend, said. Holmes's father was a lawyer in the City; his mother wrote poetry and children's books. His younger sister became an artist; his younger brother, according to Holmes, is "a brilliant advertising chap," who used to work for Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising and is now chairman of another firm. (Holmes also has an older half sister, the child of his mother's first husband, who died in the Second World War.) "If I were writing my own biography, I'd say that my imagination represents my mother's side, while my organizing principle is my father's side."

Holmes was educated at Downside, a Benedictine boarding school near Bath. "I think it's quite important that I was educated as a Roman Catholic," Holmes said. "I had a very strict academic upbringing. In one way, it was a wonderful education, and in another way you really wanted to break away from it all, to make your escape."

He got an Exhibition in English and a partial scholarship to Churchill College, Cambridge, and there he fell in with the critic George Steiner. "He was a wonderful person to have as a director of studies," Holmes said. "Also, a rather difficult personality, though in a magnificent way. It was the first time I'd come into contact with what I would consider a full-blown European intellectual—and I stress the 'European.' "

Holmes made a strong impression on Steiner, too. "From our first meeting, I was aware of his totally exceptional finesse and sensitivity and reserve," Steiner told me. "The economy and elegance of his undergraduate essays was most unusual; they were immensely literate. Yet—and here I must choose my words carefully—unlike so many mimetic acolytes, he had an immensely mature capacity to resist my charismatic influence. He played his cards close to his chest. He was not going to be a disciple."

At Cambridge, Holmes was "a great drama person," according to Helen Rogan, who was at New Hall College when he was at Churchill. "We were together in 'Lysistrata,' " she recalled. "It was very undergraduate, full of lewd laughs. Steiner walked out. Richard was certainly the hippest person at Churchill. He really believed that he was Shelley for a while." Shelley became a legend at Oxford and was rusticated for co-writing an atheistic pamphlet.

Holmes's career at Cambridge had its own ignominy. In his university exams, Part I was "brilliant, outstanding," Steiner recalls, while Part II was a disaster. Instead of the First—equivalent to our summa cum laude—that everyone had expected, he got a Second. "His final degree was a dramatic disappointment," Steiner said. "Nobody could believe it." One theory holds that Holmes's dismal performance was his way of insuring that he wouldn't become an academic. "His decision not to be a don or a hack—to be a writer without the city walls, so to speak—was a very brave one," Elisabeth Sifton, his American editor for "Footsteps," told me. "He thought about the cultural form of the writer's life. He had in mind someone like Hazlitt."

But the few years just after he left Cambridge, in 1967, were the worst period of his life. He got the only real job he has ever had—compiling the voting register for the Westminster City Council. "I sat discussing paintwork, plumbing and social security benefits in endless sad kitchens, sipping tepid tea or sweet sherry," he wrote in "Footsteps." "Powerless to act on the petty injustices and miseries I saw, I learned at least how to listen to other people, and observe some of the forces that shaped their lives. I expressed my anger in poems, written with the clumsy literalness of pop-songs, but could find no real outlet for my deeper feelings." In 1970, Holmes published a chapbook, "One for

Sorrow, Two for Joy," a thin collection of poems about drugs and politics and sex: "Autumn you are fever and fungus / the stale heats of summer copulations."

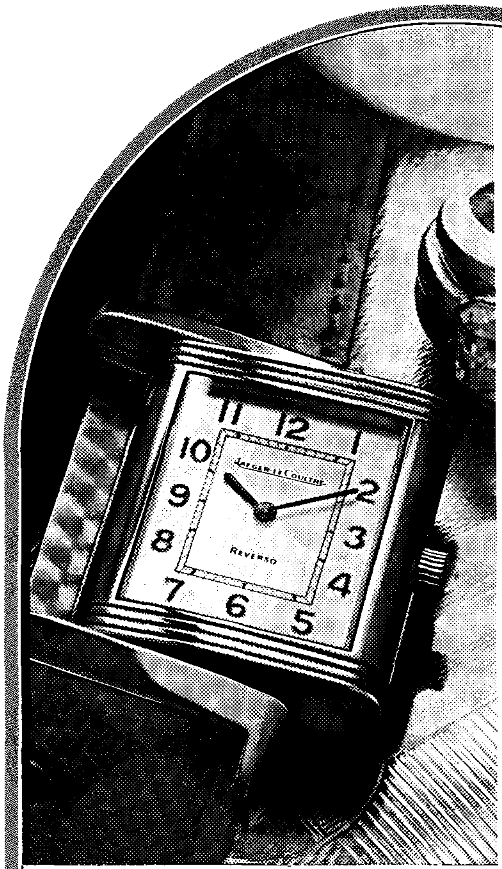
"There must have been some very dark years," Steiner speculated, noting that Holmes's "phenomenal sensibility about such areas of darkness as Savage and Johnson endured has about it the honesty of personal experience."

One night in 1968, listening to the radio in an attic room he occupied in a "kind of commune" across from Paddington station, Holmes heard the "thrilling" sound of glass shattering as demonstrators stormed the Bourse in Paris. "And suddenly the idea of 'the Revolution' came to life in my head, and I knew that it was something I had to write about," he recounted in "Footsteps."

The following year, he ended up in Paris, researching the White's Hotel group, a loose confederation of British and American intellectuals who had been drawn there in the seventeen-nineties by the original Revolution. It was actually in figures peripheral to the group—notably Wordsworth and Mary Wollstonecraft—that he found his theme. They, too, had gone to Paris to witness "the sense of something utterly new coming into being, some fresh, immense possibility of political life, a new community of hope," as Holmes put it in "Footsteps." He saw the whole ethos of the sixties—"that youthful explosion of idealism, colour, music, sex, hallucinogenic states, hyperbolic language and easy money"—prefigured in the Romantic movement.

For Holmes, France was "a literary and literal self-exile," he told me, acknowledging that his primary motive was "to get out of England." He explained, "I did feel that the very English way I was brought up in was stifling. It didn't seem to me enough. Everybody has this other country, this alternative identity. I wanted to find that second identity, so I could stand outside myself to some degree—and in order to do that you need a different geography, a different language. I always say that my jokes are different in French. It's as if you could reinvent yourself."

Back in England, Holmes did a vast amount of biographical work on Wollstonecraft and her circle, producing a nearly book-length manuscript about the White's Hotel group. It was un-



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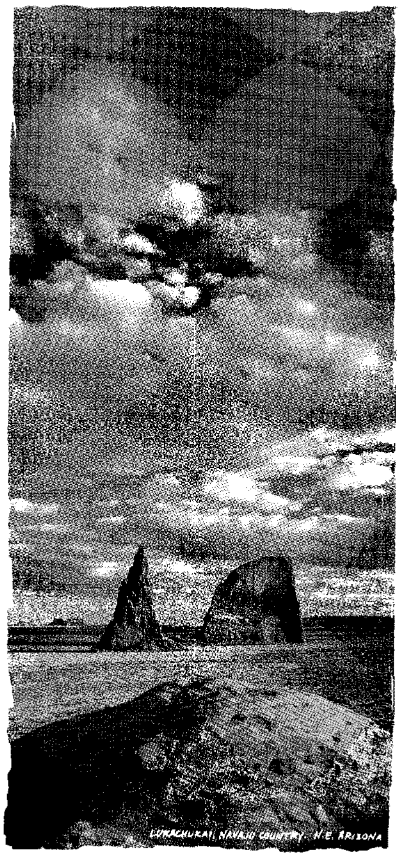

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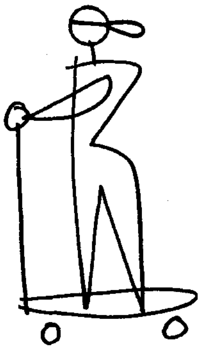
publishable. "It didn't make you want to turn the page," Richard Cohen, a contemporary of Holmes's at Downside and his editor at various stages of his career, says. (Much of the Wollstonecraft material appears in a book entitled "De Feministe en de Filosoof"—available only in Dutch.) Holmes goes about biography the way some novelists go about fiction, discarding entire drafts. In the late seventies, he wrote a hundred thousand words on the nineteenth-century French poet Gérard de Nerval: "No publisher would touch it." He needs real editing, according to Cohen. In early drafts of "J. & S.," Cohen says, he was "trying to score off" Boswell.



But there's a unity to Holmes's work; he himself sometimes speaks of it as "the canon." In his first major publication, a long biographical essay on the poet Thomas Chatterton, written when he was twenty-four, the Holmes method is already highly developed. The painstaking archival work, the fascination with sexual secrets (did Chatterton have the clap?), the almost archeological reconstruction of a vanished world: it's all there. Retracing Chatterton's precocious decline, Holmes conjures up the poet's cheap and seedy rooms in Holborn as if his ghost still lurked nearby:

> It was an area of disrepute. Labourers from Ireland, criminals and prostitutes lived there. . . . Clergymen when they visited their flock in these streets were accompanied by bodyguards. Chatterton's landlady was a Mrs Angel, a dressmaker. Dressmaking in that area was often synonymous with brothel keeping. Round the corner in Fox Court was where Richard Savage was born. Mr Cross kept his chemist shop on the corner. Even nowadays, with the pink neo-gothic edifice of the Prudential Insurance Building looming respectably along the right hand side of the road, it is not a comforting street to be in. You cannot see enough sky.

"Thomas Chatterton: The Case Reopened," published in the magazine *Cornhill*, is a masterpiece of literary detection; it ends by questioning—in a way that no other critic had—the circumstances of Chatterton's suicide, at the age of seventeen. Holmes makes a persuasive case that his death may have been the result of an accidental overdose of arsenic, which was often used in the treatment of venereal diseases.

Another Holmesian trait is also in evidence—a preoccupation with money. The fee that Chatterton commanded for a libretto was five guineas; the cost of his posthumous "Rowley's Poems" was half a crown. In "Shelley: The Pursuit" Holmes devotes page after page to the poet's chaotic finances; "Coleridge: Early Visions" is full of talk about "staff-writers" and "money-books," and the struggles of a Fleet Street freelance. And "Dr. Johnson and Mr. Savage" is stuffed with eighteenth-century financial lore. Holmes cites the celebrated axiom of Dickens' impecunious Micawber in "David Copperfield": "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery."

Holmes claims to have made his own way as a writer since the beginning of his career ("I've lived off what I've earned; it never ceases to amaze me"), though there are intimations of family money, including a small inheritance from a relative ("It sounds so Jamesian"). His main patron in the early seventies was the London *Times*. In 1967, armed with a letter of introduction from Steiner, Holmes found his way to Michael Ratcliffe, then the *Times*' literary editor. As it happened, Ratcliffe was casting about for someone to fill the shoes of Cyril Connolly and Rebecca West and Raymond Mortimer—and, before them, Belloc and Chesterton—who for generations had made reviewing for the *Times* a significant cultural event.

"Richard was an improbable journalist," Philip Howard, who later served as Holmes's editor, told me. "He didn't just review the book at hand; he'd write a two-thousand-word literary essay, and take a week to write it. You'd set the deadline twenty-four hours ahead, knowing he'd be late, and he'd trot in looking shaggy and shy, with a motorcycle helmet under his arm and his wonderful copy, hideously spelled." It was copy worth waiting for, Howard stressed. "Better than perfect," he said. "It was instantly recognizable. It had Richard's voice."

The voice *is* instantly recognizable. "It is the late afternoon, *entre chien et loup*" introduces a lively, occasionless piece on M. R. James, the Cambridge don who wrote ghost stories. "From the tall windows of the panelled library of King's College, one looks north in the half-light over the neat, shaved lawns towards Wilkins' Building, and the four mace-like spires of King's Chapel, where the choristers will soon be vesting for Evensong." The style of these early essays is lush and poetic, the choice of subject idiosyncratic: Fulke Greville, a minor Elizabethan poet; Canon Richard Barham, a nineteenth-century author of phantasmagoric tales; the London riots that form the background to "Barnaby Rudge." They're biographical gems, the equal of Strachey's "Portraits in Miniature." Holmes holds these fugitive newspaper pieces in high regard—he intends to include the best of them in a volume to be entitled "Biographer's South"—and looks back on his "Fleet Street education" as useful training. "You learn aspects of your job in journalism: meeting deadlines, writing good clear sentences, making something vivid," he said. It also put bread on the table: "If you're not affiliated with an institution you've got to have two strings to your bow."

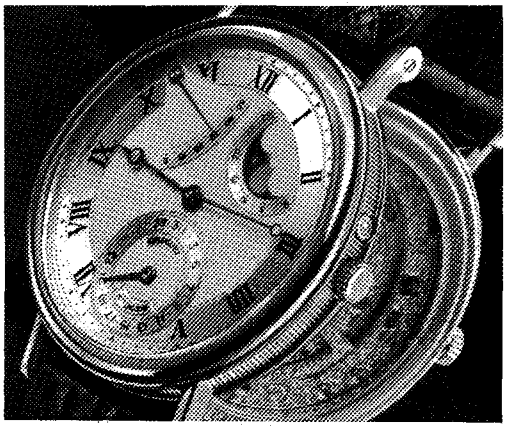
His work for the *Times* supported him while he did the research for "Shelley." Then he wrote the book day and night over fourteen months, he recounts in "Footsteps," "usually in deep depression." Why depression, I wanted to know. Holmes hesitated a long time before answering. "I find it immensely hard, physically and intellectually," he finally replied, pausing to search for the right words. "There's something about writing biography, the way your imaginative life is absorbed. There's not much left over for you. Keeping your distance requires a huge imaginative investment. You're living a sort of double life—your contemporary life and walking around with this animated history inside you."

I asked Holmes if he had ever been psychoanalyzed, and he said no. In "Footsteps," he hints at deep, destructive impulses, recounting a time he plunged into the sea off Devon on a February night, "the sound of the waves running in from the dark and slapping the pier stanchions, a sound like death." And his essay on Nerval, a psychotic who eventually committed suicide, strikes a sombre, obsessive note. But he has made it clear that self-scrutiny doesn't interest him. "You never really know what you've written; you just do work very blindly, I think," he told me. "There is, under all this logic of choice, some quite blind instinct driving you, and you can never tell whether you've got there or not. There are some issues in your work you just want to leave alone to settle—it's a sort of yeastlike principle of composition."

Despite his vaunted lack of introspection, however, Holmes is shrewdly analytic. He speaks of the "pre-biographic" as a literary form of the unconscious; he's knowledgeable about transference and countertransference; he gave the 1990 Ernest Jones Lecture at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis. His work is penetratingly interpretative. When he remarks on Johnson's neurotic habits of procrastination or on Coleridge's "fatal genius for being all things to all men," he makes them come before us in their full psychological complexity, as men with private histories and motives—men who once lived.

FOR Holmes, as for A. J. A. Symons in "The Quest for Corvo," the pursuit is part of the story. Ever since the age of eighteen, when he set off with a knapsack to follow the path through France chronicled by Robert Louis Stevenson in "Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes," he has made the literal quest for his subjects an essential component of his research. For "Shelley," he spent months tracking the poet's itinerary through Italy, hitchhiking, holing up in lonely hotel rooms and boarding houses, sleeping on the beach where Shelley drowned. For "Coleridge: Early Visions," he explored the Harz Mountains of central Germany, where Coleridge had gone to study metaphysics, and where Holmes was stopped only by the barbed wire of the East German border. Holmes describes such travels as "feeling my way into the place."

Physical objects—Thomas Hardy's steel-tipped pens, Shelley's guitar, Coleridge's laudanum-stained notebooks—hold a talismanic power over the biographer. "When you're at sea, on this tremendously rough sea," Holmes said, employing, as he frequently does, a nautical image to characterize his trade, "there's this sense it gives you that you can get one foot down to something that's historically authentic." So thor-



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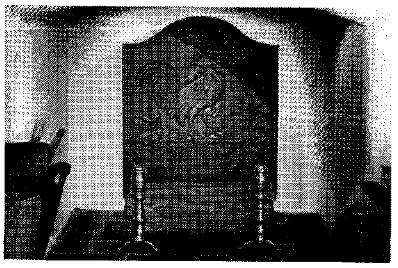

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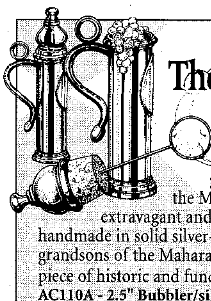

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oughly does he invade his subject that at times he seems to *become* his subject: when he was in the throes of writing "Shelley," he dated a check 1772.

In "J. & S." he reproduces eighteenth-century London with a Hogarthian eye that instantly brings it forward to the present. "The same names are on the city map, the same places," he said to me, marvelling. This determination to make the past contemporary animates Holmes as a biographer. His description of the "publisher's dinner-party in London" in 1791 at which Mary Wollstonecraft met William Godwin has the ring of an affair at Lord Weidenfeld's. Shelley's first cousin Harriet Grove was "a cool English rose of the county type (still easily recognizable; she would now own green Wellington boots and drive her father's handsomely battered Range Rover)." Shelley himself is compared to Mick Jagger.

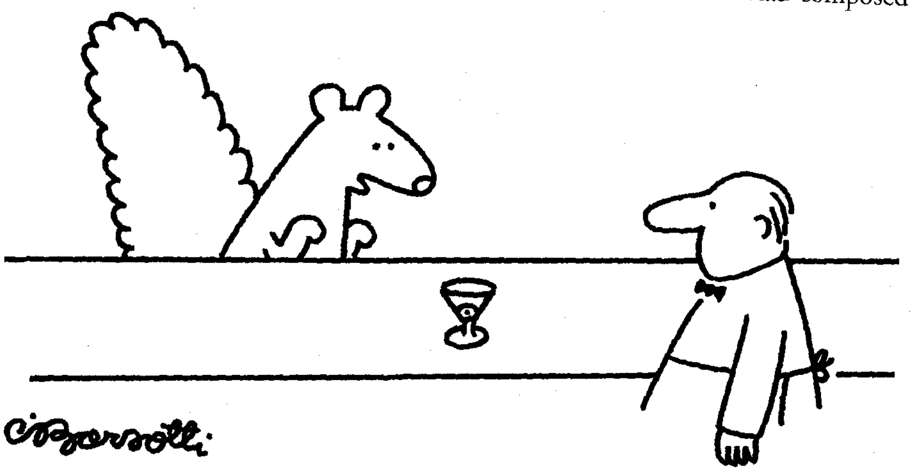
" 'Shelley' *is* a sort of sixties biography," Holmes told me. "The impact of that experience is still working its way out. It's as if there had been some kind of compacting of society during the war, a constriction of possibility, a closing down. After that, the social structures began to open up. Now this generation is having to move to the center in some kind of way, and you feel that in Coleridge. He has to come to terms with the shipwreck of his hopes. Coleridge's is a life with a second act."

HOLMES'S life also has about it the makings of a second act. After living close to the margin for two decades, writing three highly regarded but barely remunerative books, he now finds himself, by literary standards, a wealthy man. London publishing gossip puts the total sum he will receive for his American contract and the reissue of his books at well over three hundred thousand pounds. This is what English biographers make now. Michael Holroyd is reputed to have got six hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds for his three-volume Shaw. Victoria Glendinning, who got something like two hundred thousand pounds for her biography of Trollope, has just signed a two-book contract with HarperCollins for what she terms "a hell of a lot of money." (One of the books is a novel, the other a biography of Swift.) Peter Ackroyd reportedly got over a million dollars for biographies of Dickens and Blake.

Holmes himself claims not to know how much his newly negotiated deal is worth. ("He may *not* know," his friend Richard Cohen said.) But he is glad that his books "have begun to do a bit better," as he demurely puts it. He does less reviewing now that he doesn't need the money. The main thing is that he has the "huge, leisured deployments of time" that eluded Coleridge his whole life.

For all his reclusiveness, he has acquired a reputation as an electrifying lecturer—"the most brilliant performer of all time," said Glendinning, who heard him lecture at a biographical conference last year in Bodensee, Germany. "We were staying in this *Schloss*, and we all got rather English and giggly," she recalled. "Everyone else had been so theoretical that finally Richard announced, 'Tonight there's going to be singing'—and there was, until three o'clock in the morning. We were all on the floor." On the last day, Holmes read an ode he had composed about the conference. "He didn't just say it—he performed it. It was a riot."

He has also shown a flair for the dramatic entrance. He once arrived at a literary conference on foot, striding over the moors. "For a day and a half there was much talk of Mr Holmes," Michael Holroyd recalled in a review of "Footsteps." "How would he appear? Over what hill? Across what pond? From time to time messages would arrive which we carefully decoded. Then suddenly a man in a field called threateningly to us: were we looking for Mr Sherlock Holmes? We agreed that we were. He pointed onwards and we increased our pace, stumbling like a group of Dr Watsons, in pursuit of this now legendary figure—whom we eventually caught up with innocently poised near a cream tea."



"I thought it came with an acorn."

NORWICH, in the fens of East Anglia, is "important" to him, Holmes told me. It reminds him of Romney Marsh, where he grew up. After nearly three years with Rose Tremain, he feels rooted there. He invited me up, and, driving me around in his Rover one afternoon, pointed out the local Texaco station where he photocopies his manuscripts and the shed at Norfolk Garden Supplies where he gets faxes.

Images of loneliness predominated in the commentary that accompanied this tour. Of a cast-iron Victorian bridge over a spur line from Lowestoft he said, "I come here at dusk sometimes after I've been writing, when it's dusted with snow," and then he called attention to the signal box along the railroad tracks where a solitary trainman sat. As we walked in the marshy fields, he stopped to gaze at the tower of a distant church. "Sometimes when I'm walking here late and it begins to get dark, I see a light shining in the tower, and wonder who it is," he said. "I imagine it's the rector of Ranworth writing his sermon."

But it's more a loneliness of temperament than of circumstance. Back at the house, we were greeted by Rose Tremain, who wore a bulky pullover, a miniskirt, and leggings; she looked much younger than her fifty-one years. Her life with Holmes seems idyllic. "It's lovely to see two people so happy together," David Godwin said. "They're absolutely attentive." A more literary couple would be hard to find; they even write grocery notes to each other in couplets.

IT was on my last day in England that Holmes told me about his rescue at sea. "I started out gliding, then I had my motorcycle period, then boats," he began as we drove toward the coast for a look at the North Sea. He started sailing in the mid-eighties, with James MacGibbon, an elderly publisher who owned a beautiful twenty-eight-foot yacht; they often sailed to Holland and France with crews of friends. Late in the summer of 1991, they sailed to Dieppe, accompanied by a young friend of MacGibbon's. "It was a small crew—too small. On the way back, we crossed the channel at night in the fog, and it was marvellous. I remember a three-masted schooner suddenly coming out of the fog like an apparition. Then we pushed on to Rye and up around the coast of Kent—quite a long sail, really. All of a sudden, we got caught in an unforeseen squall, and the whole electrical system went on the blink. We had no lights, no navigation, no radio. Then the diesel engine cut out.

"We were in a pretty bad way. It was very rough, and we were exhausted. We had to lash ourselves to the mast to change the sails. At dawn, we fetched up on a shoal in the North Sea. You know Hopkins' 'Wreck of the Deutschland'? That was pretty much us. There was white water as far as you could see. James, who is around eighty, had got knocked around pretty badly and was semiconscious. Finally, we had to abandon ship. They teach you never to do that, but there was no other choice. We lowered the life raft and set off a couple of flares—two out of the four we had. A passing tanker saw it, but we didn't know that—they were supposed to set off a white flare acknowledging that they'd seen us, only they didn't have any. So there we were, seventeen miles from shore and floating out to sea in a squall. It was then I heard the chopper—you hear it in your chest before you see it, like the opening bars of a Wagner overture. Later, I asked the others if they had thought they were going to die, and they both said yes."

I asked Holmes if he saw any connection between Shelley's death and his own near-fatal adventure at sea. Perhaps there was some unconscious identification, a need to carry "the pursuit" to its ultimate end? "Perhaps not," he said. ♦

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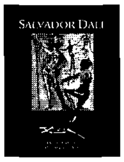

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LETTER FROM NORTH KOREA

FOLLOWING THE GREAT LEADER

To maintain his father's nation, Kim Jong Il has to maintain his father's cult. But can he do that now that its god is dead and paradise is crumbling?

BY IAN BURUMA

ACCORDING to an old legend, presented as fact in North Korean propaganda, the Korean state was founded in 2333 B.C. by a god-man named Tangun. The god-man, whose mother was a bear-woman, was supposedly born on Mt. Paekdu, which is a spectacular extinct volcano straddling the border of China and North Korea. Indeed, Mt. Paekdu has been regarded since ancient times as a sacred mountain, embodying the spirit of the Korean people. Recently, North Korean archeologists claimed to have found the tomb of the god-man near a different border—between North Korea's capital city, Pyongyang, and the Demilitarized Zone that separates North and South Korea.

So far, the son is carrying on the Kim cult—with his father's visible support.

STEVEN DANA; PHOTOS: PHILIP VANOUTRIVE & CHINE NOUVELLE/SIPA; VICTORIA YOKOTA/SYGMA

After the Japanese defeat in the Second World War, a new legend was attached to Mt. Paekdu. It was said that during the nineteen-thirties and forties Kim Il Sung, the late Great Leader of North Korea, had established a secret base on its slopes, from which he staged a guerrilla war against the Japanese and liberated the nation. It was there, too, that the so-called Juche philosophy of absolute national self-reliance is said to have come to him.

The fact is that he was nowhere near Mt. Paekdu then. He spent many of those years in Siberia, under the protective wing of the Soviet Army. But to insist on fact is to miss the point. What counts is the official myth. And the myth goes further. Not only did Mt. Paekdu become the sacred mountain of anti-Japanese resistance and revolution; it was also the birthplace of Kim Il Sung's son, Kim Jong Il, otherwise known as the Dear Leader. The hut where he is said to have been born is now a place of pilgrimage—a kind of Korean Bethlehem, visited each year by schoolchildren, Army units, and workers. The legendary birth was described this way in a North Korean government newspaper: "Amidst the bright light of the 'Great Sun' [Kim Il Sung] a 'Guiding Star' [Kim Jong Il] appeared in breathtaking splendor high atop Mt. Paekdu."

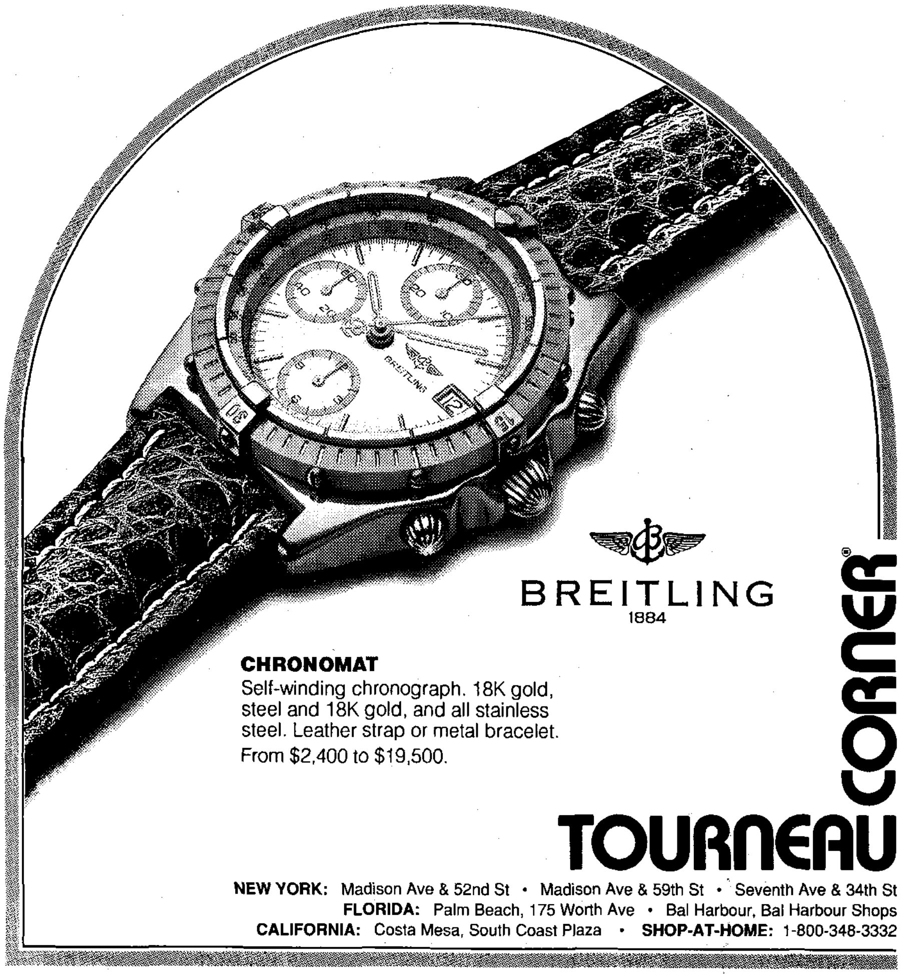
Kim Jong Il was actually born in Khabarovsk, in the Soviet Far East, but the nativity tale was a necessary step to elevate him to the divine status of his father. Whenever you see a picture of the sacred mountain—and you see one almost everywhere in North Korea—you will see a star rising above it, like the star of Bethlehem. The story contains elements of fertility myths. One North Korean publication said that Dear Comrade Kim Jong Il was "born in a humble cottage in the freshness of the snow-clad mountain, heralding the spring."

Now that the Great Leader is dead, his son's succession rests on the assumption of divine right. How can a dynastic succession be thus justified in a society supposedly based on scientific socialism? The question points up one of the contradictions that make North Korea such a peculiar place: Marxism-Leninism has been grafted onto a charismatic, nativist cult. The more pressing question is whether the son can carry on the cult built around his father. So far, the answer is that he cannot do so without the spirit of his father lending him support. Almost every new picture of the Dear Leader has the Great Leader in it, too, sitting approvingly in the background or standing on Mt. Paekdu. Stacks of these pictures have been painted since Kim Il Sung's death. You see them in museums in Pyongyang, but not yet in the streets. I was told, "The Dear Leader does not like to be painted." Perhaps not, though this discretion may end after a suitable period of mourning for the Great Leader.

When a leader is held to be divine, his sudden death poses practical problems, for dying is the one thing he is not supposed to do. Indeed, everything was done to stop Kim Il Sung from doing it. According to Ko Yong Hwan, a North Korean defector and former diplomat, a clinic staffed by two thousand pharmacists, dietitians, biologists, cardiologists, pathologists, and other specialists was established with the sole purpose of finding ways to prolong both Kims' lives. Two teams of men, corresponding in age and body type to the Great Leader and his son, were selected as guinea pigs for experiments with diets and drugs.

It didn't stave off the inevitable, but at least everything possible will be done to preserve the Great Leader's body. Experts from Moscow's Center for Biological Structures have been hired to embalm him. They are said to be charging three hundred thousand dollars. According to another rumor, however, the Great Leader will be laid to rest in Tangun's tomb, alongside the god-man's bones.

A few weeks ago, I set off for Pyong-



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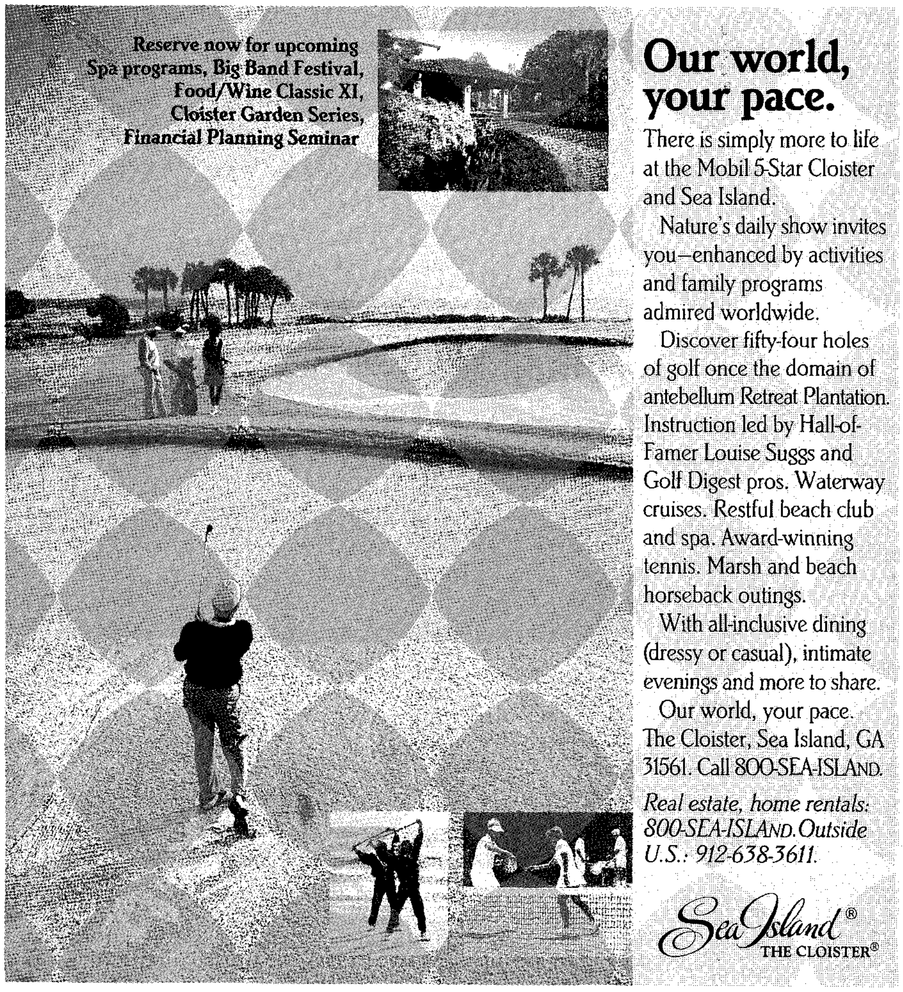

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yang by train from Beijing. To cross the Yalu River from China into North Korea is to make one of the most dramatic border crossings in the world. The river divides not just two countries but two time zones, and as you are setting your watch an hour ahead you pass from Dandong, a Chinese cowboy town full of traders, new hotels, and neon lights, to Sinuiju, a city of dilapidated concrete buildings and empty streets and loudspeakers blaring odes to the Great Leader. You have entered the world of Stalin, with a North Asian twist. I saw rows of people practicing Tae Kwon Do kicks on the riverbank—something that the entire nation, I was told, is encouraged to do every morning at eight o'clock sharp. At the Sinuiji station, old women were sweeping the empty and already spotless platform with brooms. Slogans along the railway tracks suggested that the Great Leader had not died. "Long Live Kim Il Sung!" they read, or "Kim Il Sung Will Be with Us Forever!"

Every railway station in North Korea displays twin portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, in which both look earnest and oddly ageless. But in most other pictures of the Great Leader his look is kindly—that of a tall, plump, smiling figure, always teaching lessons to his grateful people. There is a bit of Tangun in this: Tangun was not only a divine king but a teacher who spread a message of universal love. There is a Confucian element in it as well: the Chinese sage was more a teacher of political ethics than a philosopher. But the Great Leader's roly-poly agelessness and permanent smile are meant to convey, above all, a fatherly image: Kim Il Sung as the father of all Koreans, whom he liberated from Japanese rule and Yankee imperialism, and then led through the portals of the workers' paradise.

Like the Tangun cult, the worship of Kim Il Sung is presented as not only a cultural but an ethnic phenomenon—something one is born into. Nation and race are conflated. All Koreans, in both North and South, in Japan, China, and the United States, are supposed to have the same Messiah. I was told over and over by North Koreans that foreigners could not possibly understand Korean feelings about the Great Leader and his son.

Just as the train crossed the Yalu River, something curious happened to my North Korean travelling companions. Earlier, as we were rolling through northern China, a businessman from Pyongyang had lounged around happily in his long underwear, drinking beer and chatting about his complicated family life. (There had been another woman, somewhere in Europe.) He had even flirted with a young foreign tourist while his wife dozed by the window. But when we approached the border his face stiffened. He put on a suit and tie, making sure that a badge bearing the portrait of the Great Leader was pinned to his lapel. All North Koreans and overseas Korean visitors wear these badges as obligatory signs of faith and belonging.

"Nice try, Mom, but I'm going to go with a caterer."

When we arrived in Pyongyang, the businessman produced a huge bunch of orchids, which he had carried all the way from Indonesia, where he had been posted. His wife, a friendly woman who spoke no foreign languages, was sobbing. An official guide from the Korea International Tourist Company, who met me at the station, looked at the flowers, then at the woman in tears, then at me, and said, pointing to the orchids, "For our Great Leader. Since he passed away, the Korean people are very low, very, very low."

Perhaps the flowers were for the Great Leader—or, at least, for the huge bronze statue of the Great Leader on Mansu Hill. Perhaps the wife was crying because of his death. But by then I knew that she had not seen her two sons in five years. They stood waiting on the empty platform as old women furiously swept away invisible dust and two black Mercedes limousines pulled up to collect some high officials.

I ONCE had a dream—I cannot recall exactly when—whose central image remains vivid in my mind. In the dream, I passed by train through idyllic villages, filled with happy, ruddy-cheeked people who were smiling and singing and feasting. I was told by someone not to look back. But I couldn't resist, and when I turned to look I saw those people being whipped by soldiers. The tables laid with food had disappeared. The smiles had changed to tears.

Pyongyang reminded me of that dream, but not because the people looked especially miserable. They did not even look very "low," except at the Kim Il Sung statue, where they were required to look low. Nor did I see people being whipped by soldiers. But Pyongyang *is* like a huge stage set. It is the closest thing to Germania, Hitler's grandiose and happily unrealized vision of the future Berlin. Everything is gigantic in scale, and, although two million people live and work in the capital, much of it is clearly intended for display.

Pyongyang is a city of monuments to the Kim cult. At night, you can see from miles around the great torch, burning with red electric light, on top of the white granite Tower of the Juche Idea. The Juche Idea, which is as simple as it is vague, is that the people are the masters of the revolution, and in Kim Il Sungism that means that the Korean people are the masters of their own destiny. And, since Kim Il Sung was the absolute leader, he was the master of the Korean people's destiny. Odes praising the Juche Idea and the revolutionary achievements of the Great Leader decorate the pedestal, alongside reliefs of a variety of orchid called Kimilsungia. The Tower of the Juche Idea was erected in 1982, on Kim Il Sung's seventieth birthday—"at the initiative," an official tourist brochure explains, "of the dear leader Comrade Kim Jong Il and under his far-reaching plan and vigorous guidance."

The Arch of Triumph, also built for the Great Leader's seventieth birthday, is pure Albert Speer. Inscribed on the face of the arch are the dates 1925 and 1945, when the Great Leader allegedly liberated the nation from Japan. This would mean that he began his revolutionary activities when he was thirteen. Actually, official North Korean paintings of the 1919 nationalist uprising against the Japanese show that Kim was already an activist at the age of seven.

It was, however, not primarily the monuments of the showcase capital that reminded me of my dream. It was the inescapable fact that almost everything the foreign visitor—or, indeed, the local dignitary—sees there is for show. This is the Korea of virtually carless motorways leading to tourist destinations, the Korea of special trains and limousines laid on for visitors and officials, of enormous half-empty hotels, of schools with model pupils who perform like trained seals as soon as visitors appear—the Korea, in short, that has to be endlessly swept clean by old women with brooms. The most fascinating monument to this Korea is a symbol of pure hubris. It is a colossal, hundred-and-five-story hotel that stands like the Tower of Babel, empty and unfinished, in the center of Pyongyang. Somewhere along the way, the money ran out.

Not only visitors but the entire population of North Korea is caught up in the show. The vast stadiums, the soaring empty skyscrapers, the portraits of the Great Leader and pictures of scenes

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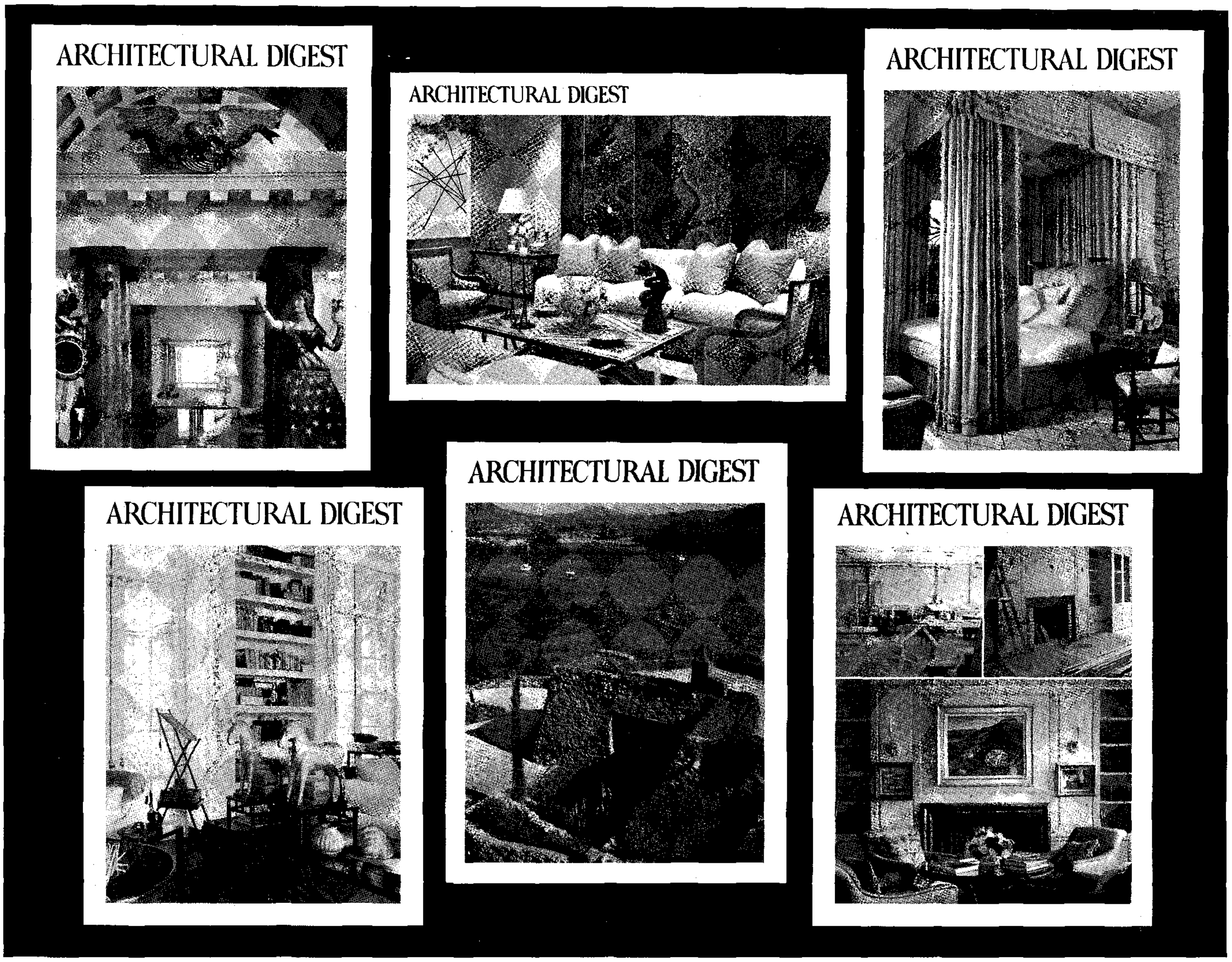

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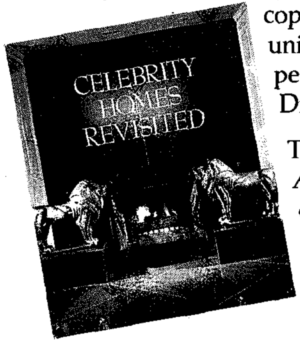

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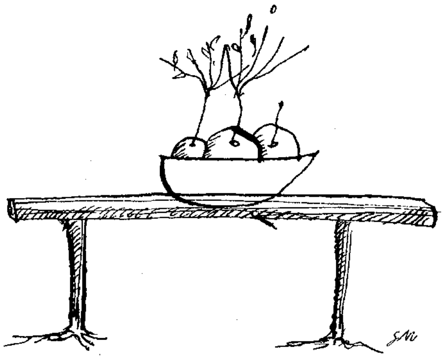
from his legendary life are meant not for visitors but for the Koreans. It is they who must be told over and over that they are living in paradise. This is all the more important now that the Great Leader is dead, and paradise is dangerously fraying. According to outside analysts who monitor the North Korean economy, industry is operating at a third of its capacity. The economic growth rate in 1992 was minus 7.6 per cent. There are reports from refugees that there isn't enough food, especially in the poor industrial towns along the coast of the Sea of Japan. And the government itself admits that there are severe energy problems.

To conserve energy, even the Koryo, the largest tourist hotel in Pyongyang, is kept partly in the dark. Guests drink in darkened bars. Lights in the elevator lobby are switched on only when a guest is in sight. The streets of Pyongyang are mostly unlit, which has one advantage: young people can hold hands in the night. When we were shown around the biggest public library, the Grand People's Study House (a hundred thousand square metres, thirty million books, ten stories, roofed with seven hundred and fifty thousand tiles, etc.), no one had switched on the lights in some of the rooms we passed, and we saw people hunched over their books in obscurity. "It rests their eyes," one guide said when she noticed that we had noticed.

And yet the show must go on. Indeed, the poorer the real conditions are, the more lavish the show must be. Huge amounts of energy are therefore spent on keeping the torch of the Juche Tower burning brightly. And the banks of floodlights casting a golden glow on the bronze statue of Kim Il Sung on Mansu Hill are not turned off until the small hours of the night. And then there is the International Friendship Exhibition, at the foot of Mt. Myohyang, three hours north of the capital by train, where sixty-one thousand gifts to the two Kims from a hundred and fifty countries, displayed in eighty rooms (twenty-eight thousand square metres, etc.), are kept at almost freezing temperatures by an air-conditioning system that could cool a small town.

Our main guide, Lee Jong, was a sophisticated man of twenty-five. Like all the North Korean guides I encountered, Mr. Lee was highly educated and quite well informed about the outside world; in another country, he might have been a diplomat or an academic. He was happy to talk about his life, and North Korean life in general. Only on the subject of the Dear Leader did he become oddly reticent. No, he could not tell us where the Dear Leader lived, or how many children he had: "We don't discuss such things with foreigners." On politics, he was more forthcoming. He was aware that some people in South Korea were better off than most North Koreans. He also knew that the fall of the Berlin Wall had been the result of popular disaffection with the Communist regime. He explained why North Korea was different. The Great Leader and the Dear Leader were still loved by the Korean people, he said. And the Korean people loved their socialist system, too, for capitalism was based on greed and egotism. Things might *look* better in South Korea, he said, "but it is the substance, the inner meaning, that counts, not the façade." He said that all Koreans are taught a parable in secondary school: "A stage set can look very beautiful, until you look behind it and see the dust and the dirt. That is why we have to analyze politics logically, and think of the substance, not just the glittering façade."

That was one of several times when I wondered whether he was speaking ironically. But the more I saw of him, the more I realized how serious he was. In any event, irony would have got him in trouble. You cannot afford to be ironic in a place like North Korea: faith—in public, at least—must be total. Where laughter would be fatal, everyone must keep a straight face. The Great Leader's own gravitas was helpful here: he may have been murderous, but he was not laughable. It is harder to see how people can take Kim Jong Il—with his platform shoes, his bouffant hairdo, and his show-biz pretensions—seriously. The Dear Leader is a film buff, and has directed the filming of some interminable epics. I asked Mr. Lee whether he had seen any of these films. "Of course," he said. Were they any good? Mr. Lee hesitated for a moment, and then said that the Dear Leader had made a thorough study of the Korean people's feelings and had developed from that a new style of cinema. Yes, but were the films any good? An intent look: "Of course."



AUGUST 15TH is Liberation Day in both Koreas—liberation from Japan. In Pyongyang this year, the Pan-Korean Alliance for National Reunification (on North Korean terms) organized a huge demonstration, attended by North Koreans and sympathetic Korean residents of Japan, China, and the United States. The weekend before, the Pan-Koreans marched through the streets dressed alike—white T-shirts and banners for the overseas Koreans, white shirts and slacks for the locals. They beat their chests in unison, shouting, "Fatherland, unite! Fatherland, unite!" Various demonstrators spoke to local TV reporters, though "spoke" is not quite the right word: they howled, they cried, they hooted—about one blood and one nation. The marchers, too, were in a state bordering on hysteria: their eyes bulged, their fists thumped, their voices shrieked. And yet, hard as this may be to imagine, the hysteria was totally controlled; nobody spoke out of turn.

I watched these outbursts on TV with Mr. Lee. He looked on impassively; he was not the hysterical type. I asked him whether he had ever taken part in such parades. Of course, he said. Did he get excited? Of course, very excited. I tried to imagine the scholarly Mr. Lee caught up in organized mass hysteria—a quiet, well-mannered, intelligent human being swept along by collective madness. To wonder about the sincerity of these emotions is to misunderstand the nature of North Korea: a lack of sincerity would make life unbearable.

Thousands of radical students in South Korea staged demonstrations, too—disorderly ones that turned violent. They had insisted that they would march to the DMZ, to protest the presence of United States troops and to link up with their northern brethren. The riot police in Seoul stopped them, and a battle began, with Molotov cocktails and rocks on one side, and tear gas on the other. When Mr. Lee heard the news, he told us, he had cried. "So cruel," he said, his eyes moistening. "So cruel." I asked him what would happen if North Korean students decided to riot against the police in Pyongyang. Mr. Lee laughed, and said, "What a strange question. How could they possibly do such a thing? The government supports our students." He laughed again, and shook his head incredulously: "What a truly crazy question."

If there is something obsessive-compulsive about the broom-swept order of North Korean society (or, at least, that part of its society which is visible to outsiders), there is something lachrymose about Korean nationalism, something that encourages fits of howling and floods of tears. Like the Irish or the Poles, Koreans (on both sides of the hundred-and-forty-four-mile-long DMZ) are taught to see themselves as permanent victims of foreign predators. This is understandable up to a point, since Korea has always been squeezed between the contending interests of Russia, China, and Japan. And the misfortunes of the last hundred years have been especially harsh. The Korean War alone left a devastated country in which millions of people were dead or were cut off from their families. The typical national hero in Korea is a "martyr," killed by some foreign enemy. One of the great monuments in Pyongyang is the Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery, a vast field of heroic bronze heads mounted on granite tombstones.

The real history of Korea has been one not just of martyrdom but of deals, compromises, and collaboration with foreign rulers. These have added a sense of humiliation to the frequent bouts of carnage, and that is precisely where the propaganda of Kim Il Sungism has been most effective. Whereas South Korea was governed after 1945 by former Korean officials of the Japanese empire, and then by protégés of Washington, the Great Leader can claim to have fought against both the Japanese and the Americans. (His debts to China and the Soviet Union are treated with discretion.) In contrast to the early postwar South Korean leaders, Kim Il Sung is presented as the god-man who saved Korea. He was the Great Father, who

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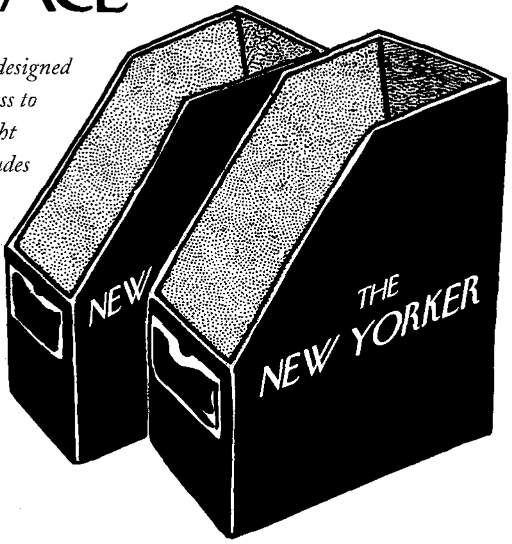

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Mort Gerberg

"Dennis, I would like to talk to you for a minute—off line."

• •

promised to unite once again all people "with Tangun's blood in their veins."

In history museums in Pyongyang, large maps show the Korean peninsula surrounded by little model ships: a British ship here, a Dutch or a French or an American one there. These represent the vessels that landed in Korea in the nineteenth century, in the hope of opening the country to trade. Many of them were sunk or set afire by hostile Koreans. A ubiquitous picture shows Kim Il Sung's great-grandfather helping to torch the General Sherman, an American merchant ship that arrived in 1866. The General Sherman is described in North Korean history as a "pirate ship," and all the foreign expeditions are seen as "attempts by capitalist powers to invade our country."

To be isolated from the outside world and under the care of Kim Il Sung was to be protected from foreign enemies. So the distress over his death is probably real. His demise has left people with a sense of unease, of vulnerability. The Great Father has gone, and it is doubtful whether his son can easily fit into his shoes. For Kim Jong Il did not defeat the Japanese or the Americans—not even in the official imagination. He just made long movies.

Of all the tearful places in Pyongyang, the Kim Il Sung monument on Mansu Hill is the most overwrought. Since the Great Leader's death, millions have walked up the steps to the great bronze statue, which stands in front of a mosaic of Mt. Paekdu (seventy metres long, 12.85 metres high, etc.), and bowed their heads for a minute's silence after laying down their flowers at its base. Old women and schoolchildren sweep, while officials stand by with cold water and emergency telephones to be used in the event of heart attacks or other ill effects of emotional shock. A dirge is played over the loudspeakers, and the sobbing voice of an official mourner repeats over and over (in the tradition of Korean shamanism), "Our father will be in our hearts forever." I watched as row after row of people advanced. The last group I saw was a kindergarten class, led to the statue by young teachers. First, the teachers began to cry, and within seconds the entire class was wailing with grief.

ON the eve of Liberation Day, Mr. Lee was excited about the news: after the first round of the Geneva talks, the United States had agreed in principle to recognize North Korea if Pyongyang would freeze its nuclear program. Mr. Lee said that the Korean people were very happy, because "at last we will be treated as equals." He said that the United States had been an arrogant big power, which had always looked down on Korea as a small country: "We were laughed at for being the last socialist state, but now, at last, we will be treated seriously."

Mr. Lee's patriotism was clearly genuine. But his emotion exposed a dilemma in North Korean politics which Kim Jong Il will find difficult, if not impossible, to resolve. People have been made to live in national isolation, and told to see the outside world as hostile to Korea. That is the basis of Kim Il Sungism. It is the root of the Juche Idea. Without this institutionalized paranoia, the dictatorship of the Kims loses its raison d'être. At the same time, however, the Korean leadership craves recognition from foreigners, and especially from the United States, and Kim Jong Il is said to realize that the country must open itself to foreign investment and trade in order to save the economy from collapse—a collapse caused by making a fetish of autarky. To open up is the only way to avoid catastrophe, including widespread famine, but it is likely to mean the end of the Juche Idea and the Kim dictatorship. The cult of the Kims is nativist and xenophobic, yet the Great Leader was built up as a messianic figure of worldwide importance—indeed, as the greatest leader who had ever lived. Hence the store set by tributes, in the form of gifts and extravagant praise, paid to the two Kims by foreigners. North Korean magazines publish photographs of happy African villagers or Central American factory workers or Middle Eastern peasants all reading Kim Il Sung's thoughts on Juche. North Korea may be an isolated paradise, but the thirst for foreign acknowledgment of its paradisal qualities is without bounds.

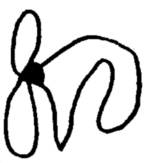
This type of internationalism is, of course, a crude hoax, as much a fake as those paid editorials praising the achievements of Kim Il Sung in the *Times*. The Kim cult thrives on fear, ignorance, and isolation; it could not survive a real opening to the outside world. And yet some people expect North Korea to open its doors soon—at least, for business. European businessmen sit around the darkened bars of the Koryo Hotel, like those nineteenth-century ships hovering on Korea's coast, waiting for opportunities to trade. One British businessman, pasty-faced from too much time spent in dark rooms, told me that North Korea would move swiftly, like Vietnam: "It will explode with business."

In the meantime, these waiting men lead an unenviable life, playing pool in the hotel and pining for the affections of the odd secretary at some Southeast Asian embassy. Their contact with local Koreans is minimal. Koreans do not receive foreigners at home, and any conversation with a foreigner will likely be reported. I asked the British businessman what would happen if Koreans failed to abide by this convention. "They would disappear," he said, sipping a glass of surprisingly good French wine.

THE first thing I noticed on my visit to Panmunjon, in the Joint Security Area in the DMZ, which I had visited once before, from the South, was the difference between the North and the South Korean soldiers. Perhaps the Southerners had been specially selected for their size: they were tall, musclebound men, like football players or United States marines, fed on milk and steaks. The Northerners, by contrast, looked unkempt and scrawny. There is also, I discovered, a distinct difference in atmosphere on the two sides of the DMZ: approaching it from the South, you are greeted by G.I.s shouting absurd battle cries, such as "Keep Up the Fire!" and "Tomahawk!" There is on the Southern side a pumped-up air of vigilance, of standing, as the United States Army guides like to put it, "on the edge of freedom."

The atmosphere on the Northern side is relaxed, almost lackadaisical by comparison. Small, thin soldiers lounge about. The officers politely go through the motions of giving you the standard line about United States imperialists dividing the motherland, and so forth. But there is no sign of overt hostility or belligerence. Instead, there is an air of boredom. If the Third World War were to start anywhere, this would be the last place to expect it.

Such impressions are, of course, unreliable. Small, hungry men can be ferocious fighters. And violence has flared up from time to time in the DMZ: in 1976, two United States officers were axed to death by North Korean guards when the Americans tried to prune a poplar. But no amount of propaganda can obscure the sense of decrepitude and deprivation among the North Korean soldiers—and soldiers are a relatively privileged, well-looked-after segment of the North Korean population. You see them along roads, and on construction sites as "volunteers," stripped to the waist, hacking away at stones and concrete blocks with primitive metal instruments. You see them shuffling through the revolutionary museums and past the monuments, mouths agape, like bewildered peasants. And you see them scratching their heads when yet another jeep or truck has broken down.



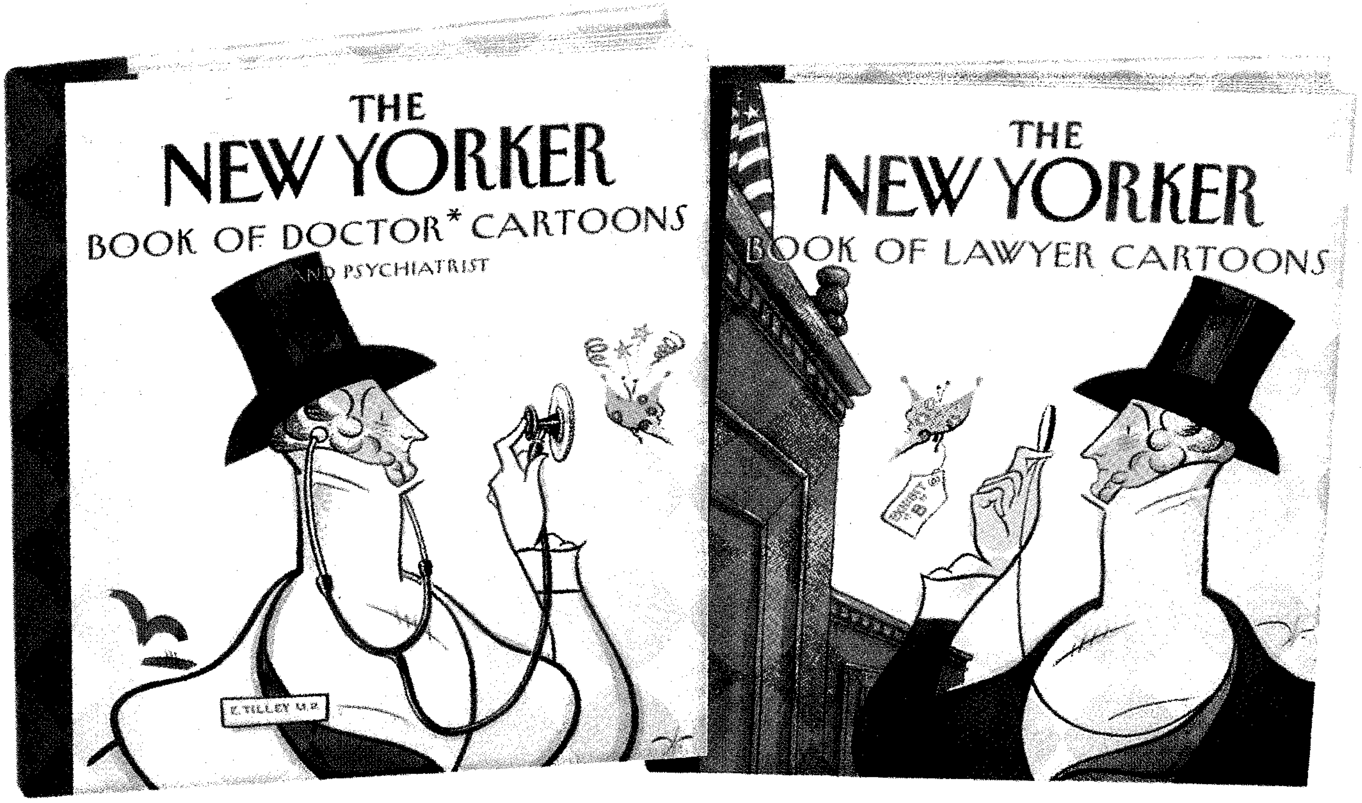
The visible truth is that North Korea has a hard time keeping its million-plus Army up to snuff. That is one possible reason for building a nuclear bomb: it is the cheapest way to maintain military clout. It is also the only bargaining chip that North Korea has for exacting concessions from the hostile outer world. But it is difficult to see how, even with a bomb, the government will be able to achieve its goal, perhaps the only goal that still carries conviction among the North Korean people: national unification, on Pyongyang's terms; that is to say, the establishment of a confederation, under a single national congress, after the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops.

The official line, repeated like a mantra, is that the Korean peninsula will be reunited in 1995. It is an effective line, for it appeals to deep emotions. In Kaesong, the nearest town to the DMZ, a woman guided us around a Buddhist temple. She was good-looking, in her mid-thirties. She had children. She told us the story of her father: He was from the South, from a village near Seoul. When the Korean War broke out, he had "warmly welcomed our Great Leader, Kim Il Sung," and "during the strategic retreat of our Army he moved to the North." The jargon obscured what had really happened; perhaps he was a left-wing patriot of some kind, swept along by events. He was tortured badly by the South Korean police, his daughter said, and after moving to the North he lived on a state pension for the disabled. He decided to live in Kaesong because it was the nearest point to the South. He never gave up longing for his native village. On moonlit nights, he would take his daughter to the top of a mountain near the DMZ and stare at the South, weeping. Just before he died, last year, he drew a map of his village, so that his daughter could visit his family and pay her respects to his parents' graves. She said she expected to be there in 1995.

Her wish is unlikely to come true, unless the Kim dynasty falls, for the obscurantist myths of Kim Il Sungism could not survive in a unified Korea. Exposure to the reality of the South would lay bare too many lies. North Korean students who defected to South Korea after witnessing the fall of the Berlin Wall in East Germany were asked what they thought would happen if the dictatorship fell. They predicted mass violence and revenge killings on a larger scale than what had happened in Romania.

It is hard to know what most North Koreans imagine unification would be like, for they know so little about the South. Unlike the East Germans before 1989, they cannot tune in to the radio or television stations of the other, forbidden half of their former country. When I offered to play a tape of South Korean pop music on my Walkman, Mr. Lee turned away, as though I had proposed to play the Devil's music. He was adamant. He could not possibly permit himself to listen.

The exchange occurred on our trip to Mt. Myohyang, not far from the nuclear plant in Yongbyon. We were the only passengers on the train. Our conversation turned once again to the Berlin Wall. "Next year, our wall will also fall," Mr. Lee said with absolute conviction. "And, like the Germans, we will celebrate the liberation of our country." There was no hint of irony—I think. In his mind, it was the South Koreans who would be freed from tyranny. I looked at his earnest bespectacled face, so full of hope. Here was a privileged young man, a member of the élite, trusted to deal with foreigners. He could still be counted on to defend a bankrupt dynasty. But when the wall finally does come down that same earnestness and zeal could turn around very quickly to devour the gods he once believed in. ♦



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ANNALS OF EDUCATION

CLASS STRUGGLE

The odds may never have been in their favor, but the twenty-six students in Rudi Gedamke's remedial-skills class at City College were hoping that a degree would get them a better future. In the course of a semester, the author watches a teacher and his students fight to succeed.

BY JAMES TRAUB

IN the fall of 1992, the College Skills class taught by Rudi Gedamke was assigned to a high, bare room in the basement of Townsend Harris Hall, a fine old Gothic battleship of a building on the campus of the City College of New York. College Skills was a remedial course required of students who failed, or in some cases barely passed, the reading test administered to all incoming City College students. There were twenty-six students in Rudi Gedamke's class—an appalling class size for remedial work, though not an uncommon number at City College or at the other colleges in the City University system. The class had about equal numbers of black and Hispanic students and three Chinese students; there were no whites. About half the class, according to the answers on a questionnaire that Rudi handed out on the first day, had been admitted to City through SEEK, a CUNY-wide program that offers small scholarships and academic help to students who do not meet the system's modest admissions standards but are deemed to have been disadvantaged by poverty. Most of Rudi's students were taking a remedial English course as well as College Skills, though more than half of them were native English speakers.

Many of the students wrote painfully candid answers to one of Rudi's written questions: "What are your strengths and weaknesses in reading/studying?" Yesenia, a SEEK student who had been speaking English for only five years, wrote, "My weakness is pronouncing words, vocabulary. Also writing about topic. I don't like to read a lot." (The students asked that I not use their last names; in one case, I have altered a distinctive first name as well.) Margaret, who, at thirty-eight, was the oldest student in the class, wrote, "My strength in reading is finishing the book. My weakness is I can't remember what I have read." Many of the students admitted that they often could not understand what they read. A few chose the route of braggadocio, but self-awareness tended to get the better of them. "I can 80% of the time instantly memorize anything I read the first time," Che, who planned to be an engineer, wrote. "The disadvantage I usually read comic books and draw."

Their expectations were not much different from those of college students everywhere. Most answered the question "What will you be doing ten years from now?" by writing that they hoped to have a family, a stable job, and a home—"a beautiful home in a suburban area and a Lexus,", Yvonne, a Guyanese student, wrote. Sherri planned on having an entertainment company of her own. Simeon expected to have degrees in physics and electrical engineering, "with a lot of funding for my research projects." Many had dreams of helping the world—as architects, say, or teachers. Others just wanted to get rich. Sometimes a tiny note of desperation crept into their grandiose plans. Janet, a shy Hispanic girl, wrote, "I wish I can be a very happy person by that time."

NO doubt Townsend Harris would have been wonder-struck by the composition of Rudi Gedamke's class, but a more interesting question is whether he would have been horror-struck as well. It was Harris, a New York merchant and diplomat, who shamed and prodded the city into establishing the nation's first municipal college, in 1847. "Let the children of the rich and the poor take their seats together," Harris proclaimed, "and know of no distinction save that of industry, good conduct and intellect." Harris's meritocratic impulse was well ahead of his time: not until the early part of the twentieth century, when a vast tide of Eastern European Jewish immigrants rolled into New York, was City College able to draw on a population eager to advance its cause through study.

From the beginning, City College was free, and open to all who passed an entrance exam. In the early part of this century, a high-school diploma was enough to get a student in, but, as the pool of high-school graduates expanded, City repeatedly raised its standards, to the point where only the academic élite of New York's public schools could gain admission. These moves, of course, only made the school more desirable. For the Jewish immigrants, with their respect for learning—both pious and worldly—and their fierce drive to make it in the New World, City College, perched atop the St. Nicholas Heights, in Harlem, became almost a second Statue of Liberty—the fulfillment, Irving Howe wrote, of Emerson's promise that "this country, the last found, is the great charity of God to the human race." Howe was a City graduate; so were Sidney Hook and Alfred Kazin and Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell and Seymour Martin Lipset and Nathan Glazer; so were several generations of New York's most successful lawyers and accountants and teachers.

Though City styled itself "the Harvard of the proletariat," Howe, Kristol, and others have written that the level of the teaching was often humdrum and the facilities threadbare. Less intellectually ambitious graduates have been more inclined to attribute a real shaping influence to their City years, but there's no question that City's greatness lay more in its students than in itself.

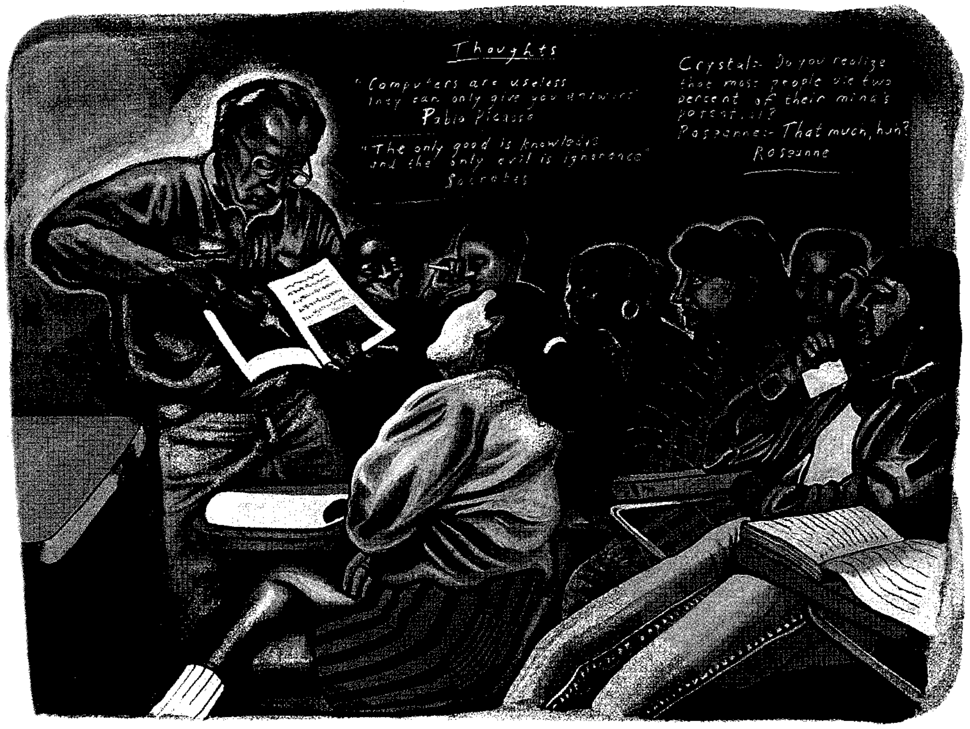
The "Jewish quota" prevented many able students from attending more illustrious schools, while poverty had the same effect on most of the others. City could choose from New York's finest graduates. These boys (girls weren't admitted until the fifties) had already been worked hard by a public-school system that focussed its energies on the best students and often serenely accepted failure for the also-rans. They had grown up immersed in a culture—not just Jewish culture but that of prewar New York—where words and ideas had real glamour, and even real danger. And they had been sustained, despite the ravages of the Depression, by strong bonds of family and neighborhood. Their success was all but guaranteed.

By the nineteen-sixties, however, New York was running out of working-class Jewish boys. The students who most needed City's boost into the middle class were the blacks and Puerto Ricans who lived all around the campus but had been excluded, with only a few exceptions, by the college's rigorous admissions standards. The institutions and culture that had buoyed the immigrants of another generation had virtually disappeared; inner-city poverty was disabling in a way that it had not been before, and in a way that the schools seemed unable to overcome. And the students who, despite everything, had excelled in high school were now being plucked by the better colleges or, at least, going off to the new state-university system. For the others, what was now the City University system, or CUNY—consisting of nine senior colleges and seven two-year community colleges supported by combined city and state funding—was the only hope for higher education. And by this time a college degree had become an almost indispensable route to the good life.

The SEEK program brought significant numbers of minority students to the senior colleges starting in 1965. But that only served to increase the clamor for access. In the spring of 1969, with both the civil-rights movement and the protest movement on campus having plunged headlong into violent confrontation, a group of black and Puerto Rican students occupied a portion of City's campus to force attention to a demand for much greater minority representation on campus. Despite a left-wing tradition that stretched back to Howe and his fellow Trotskyists in the nineteen-thirties, most of City's faculty and alumni and many of its students were horrified, both by the violation of norms of behavior and by the threat to the school's meritocratic tradition. The conflict took on near-apocalyptic dimensions. Something large was clearly at stake: a contest not only between ethnic blocs but between the free-market liberalism of the postwar world and a new politics of redress and affirmative action. In the end, the strikers won, and not only at City College. CUNY agreed that by the fall of 1970 all New York City high-school graduates would be guaranteed a place in a community college, and that admission to the senior colleges, including City, would be far easier than it had been. This system came to be called "open admissions."

While some colleges in the system, like Queens and Lehman, continued to draw upon the largely white middle-class neighborhoods around their campuses, City, in the middle of Harlem, underwent an almost overnight transformation in the racial and economic-class makeup of its student body. By 1976, sixty-three per cent of the students were black or Hispanic. And the academic change was just as radical: City went from having a tiny remedial program to having one that by the early seventies served more than half of the entering students. The early years of open admissions were a time of turmoil and embitterment and very fragile hope. The memoirs of disenchanted professors from that time have titles like "The Death of the American University"—momentous phrases that bear witness to the continuing sense that City stood for something larger than itself.

Now, a quarter century later, City has changed once again, if not quite so drastically. Immigration has transformed its demographics: two-thirds of the students describe themselves as either black or Latino, but as many as half of that group are immigrants from the Caribbean, Africa, or Central or South America. Though City's reputation has suffered gravely from the notoriety of Leonard Jeffries, the militant chairman of its Black Studies Department, the immigrants, thanks to their single-minded dedication, do more to establish the tone of daily life on campus than he and his followers do. Many of these stu-



"Something has gone wrong here," Gedamke wrote in a letter to an administrator, and the university is "locked into a silent contract of fraud."

SUE COE

AIR TRAVEL
TICKETS
BOOTH

"I want an aisle seat in no smoking, lots of fresh air, proper maintenance, no cracks in the fuselage—and none of your frigging bug spray!"

• •

dents are well prepared for college life; they dominate City's highly regarded engineering school and its premedical programs. City also has a small cadre of students who take sophisticated courses in the liberal arts.

But these students—crucial as they are to City's feel and to its future—are still a minority; remedial programs still serve nearly half of the entering students. There are two levels of College Skills, and also of remedial English; there are five levels of remedial math. Many of the students who begin at the lowest levels drop out before reaching the regular curriculum. And almost a third of the freshman students begin in one of three levels of English as a Second Language—a sequence that is considered "developmental" rather than remedial. Over all, about sixty per cent of City's entering students drop out, but some of those eventually graduate from another CUNY college.

On that first day of class, Rudi handed out a sheet that set forth in sequence the intellectual skills he hoped to cultivate: Intake, Storage, Retrieval, and Critical Analysis. Rudi understood his mandate in the broadest possible sense: his goal was to develop critical abilities in students who he believed had reached college without them. "A lot of these kids don't really think," he had told me in his office, an unkempt cell in City's Pentagon-like North Academic Center, a few weeks before opening day. "There's a lot of daydreaming-type thinking." Rudi would seek to teach his students to extract meaning from texts, to recapitulate faithfully, to recognize nuance, and to construct an argument.

In the initial stage, Intake, Rudi wanted to explain how to make sense out of information. "What is communication?" he asked in one of the first classes of the term. Rudi was pacing back and forth across the classroom, big rimless glasses perched on a broad brow. His hair was a thick gray thatch with flashes of brown. He had been a soccer star as a kid in Germany, and he had the barrel-chested build of an athlete. He wore a tweed jacket that was too tight; his look was macho rather than scholarly. "Does my *shirt* communicate anything?" he asked. Someone snickered. "Bad taste, O.K. How about my position? I'm standing, you're all sitting. Does that communicate anything? Authority, maybe? And then sometimes I kneel down to help you with your work. Am I trying to say something different? What about space? *I* have all this space up here, and *you're* sitting close together. How would I react if you tried to get into my space?" Rudi had the habit of dicing up his sentences into staccato bits and piercing them with innumerable questions and hesitations designed to be filled in by students. He was, in fact, trying to get them into his space, but he wasn't having much luck.

Rudi was trying to get the class to understand that information can be decoded not only from the abstract, school-worn forms of textbooks and work sheets but from the living world of shirts and postures and interactions. He had come to believe that students generally had as much trouble assigning meaning to pictures as to paragraphs. He was skeptical of the theory that a new generation had become "image-literate" rather than "word-literate." The real problem, he thought, was that students lacked the habit of forming generalizations, of thinking critically. Rudi spent the first few weeks of class assigning passages from a college-skills textbook and trying to give the students an intuitive feeling for the differences between a topic, a generalization, and a detail. He also harped constantly on language. "Talk to me in whole sentences," he said one morning. "By the end of the term, I want you to talk to me in whole paragraphs." If the students were to think in more complex terms, they needed a more complex language; if they were to operate in an academic environment, they needed a more academic form of speech.

But Rudi didn't want to lose them

through abstraction; he wanted them to taste the tang of language, the sheer play and variety of it. One of his regular assignments was to make a list of new words and phrases that they had come across. Every morning before class, the students were to go to the board and write down the ones that were especially strange and wonderful. This turned out to be an instructive, if slightly demoralizing, experiment. Nobody knew the meaning of "inoculate" or why "fourplay" was misspelled. Among the words that wound up on the board were "reckon," "subtlety," and "habitual." Most of the phrases the students came up with were slang or had been lifted from jingles. Their language came from talk and from television, not from reading. Andrew, a Ghanaian student, wrote down this cryptic bit of advice: "To be a winner you got to drop a chicken dinner." Che offered, "Your batteries are Elvis."

Much as Rudi worried about his students' lack of language and reasoning skills, what really upset him was their attitude. Where was the hunger for learning, the hope of salvation, that had propelled generations of immigrants, including Rudi himself, through City College? "High school teaches them to be passive," Rudi said to me one day after class. "The schools are doing a better job of weeding out the druggies and the bad guys, so the students who come here are nice kids. And in high school being nice was validated as an academic skill." The class often seemed sunk in apathy. Many of the students kept their jackets on even though it was warm inside, as if they were planning to stick around for only a minute or two. In the second week of class, Rudi was already worried that he was losing them. "A lot of you are not functioning," he said one morning. A new, admonitory tone was creeping into his voice. "A lot of you are just drifting by." He peered into the depths of the back row, where five or six black kids always sat, and said, "What is wrong with you?" Rudi's tone was plaintive rather than angry. The question was met by dead silence.

Rudi had a special gift for using the attendance roll to reel in his wayward students. "Mario?" he called out one morning. "We're making progress. You're still sitting in the back, but at least you don't have that *attitude*." Mario was at least making eye contact. That morning, he was sitting next to Curtis, who unquestionably did have that attitude: his eyes shone angrily beneath the bill of his cap. The cap never came off, and Rudi knew better than to try to get a rise out of him. "Cantina?" he continued. "Come talk to me. I'm losing you." Cantina had joined a remote, all-female fastness under the windows in the far wall. Rudi was losing those girls, too. "Anton? Anton's going to give me a hug before the end of the term—and he's going to *like* it." Anton grimaced, and Rudi flashed him a mocking grin.

Anton and his friend Aisha were the only really bright-eyed citizens of the isolated back-row nation. Anton was wiry and spare, with cheekbones so sharp they made his face diamond-shaped, a wispy goatee, close-cropped hair, and small, round ears. Sometimes Anton came to class with his cap on backward and an expression on his face that said, "Don't get near me." At his vocational high school, Transit Tech, Anton had, by his own account, walked around with a big chip on his shoulder. He told me proudly how he had taunted an English teacher, who responded by flunking him. Anton had been forced to make up the class by independent study. "That teacher was a pushover," he said, "so I pushed her over." But Anton was smart enough that the only problems he had had in school were the ones he made for himself.

Rudi made quick, intuitive judgments about people, and he had decided right away that he could take the risk of shaking Anton up. Rudi recognized in Anton a wary young man who was afraid of dropping the cool pose he had carried until now. Anton needed to know that he could be accepted, even embraced; but Rudi had to keep it light, or Anton would bolt. Anton seemed to make a point of taking two steps backward for every step forward. One morning, Rudi said "Did anybody find a new word?" and Anton said "Yes."

"Could you tell me what it was?"

"No."

"Did you write it down?"

"Yes."

Anton still had the idea, from high school, that he could play on his own terms. Sometimes he studied, sometimes he didn't; he spoke when the spirit moved him. He tried to toy with Rudi and with his fellow-students. And he was good at it. One day a few weeks into the term, Rudi asked if the habit of being critical was more natural to some cultures than to others, and Anton said, deadpan, "Broads are the most critical." This started the closest thing to a real discussion that the class had yet conducted. Aisha, sitting next to Anton, kept the game going. Guys, she said, were as likely as girls to criticize a girl's appearance. It was mostly a joke, a little game of verbal tennis, but Mario, forever earnest and often out of his depth, said that Anton was right. "They forever seeing something they want—that's why they shopping," he said. Anton replied, with only the lightest hint of archness, "What you basically are saying is that it's imprinted in them, and then it's developed through shopping."

Like Rudi, I was determined to break into the impacted mass of the back row. I often took a seat there and tried to make conversation, but I rarely got far. It was true that, save for Rudi, I was the only white person in the room, but the air of reserve didn't seem at all racial. The students barely talked to one another, and the students in the back were the most isolated of all. Curtis hardly acknowledged my existence. I couldn't get more than a word or two from Che, who, like Curtis, almost never spoke in class. The situation was somewhat different with Andrew, the Ghanaian student: his upbringing had obviously included lessons in deportment toward elders. He was a shy young man with a round moon face and skin so black that it made his eyes look yellow, like vellum. After class one day in late September, Andrew and I walked across the path that separated Harris Hall from the cafeteria, bought our lunch, and sat down.

Andrew spoke so softly that it was hard to hear him over the racket of chairs scraping and trays rattling. He said that he hoped to be an engineer. "Back in Accra, I read something that mentioned computers," he said. "I thought, What is computer? So there was a store I found that sold computers, and I talked to the salesman in the store. He showed me how to do graphics on the computer, and he drew a plane. Ever since I was a

IN THE CITY OF EVENTUAL PEACE

We had been gone for so much time
that when we returned we warned ourselves
against sentiment, against the possibility
of longing glances at the vacant space
where a café had stood, or the decay
and splintered masonry marking the place
where we had lived. But when the town
unfurled from the shadows of dawn,
the windows flaring in the sun and the cathedral
bells casting a cloud of birds into the air,
it was as if we had never left,
as if even the dust of our last sighs
had remained here in the wind, settling
occasionally on shutters or roof tiles, leaving traces
of us like fingerprints before being borne away again.

In the square, the cracks fanned across the asphalt
with the same starlike pattern that they always had,
the linens on the sidewalk tables were creased
beneath glass vases, holding the same carnations,
sold always by the Irishwoman who had seemed to us
so foreign, smelling of salt and grass, in those days
before we escaped our simple origins.
We rounded each corner of the city expecting
to meet her, carrying her bouquets, or to encounter
those phantasmal pieces of ourselves which had lingered
in this place while we were becoming distant.

Crossing the hotel lobby after a day of old movements,
after walking together with a gathering of ghosts
through buildings and parking terraces,
under the Ferris wheel painted lavender long ago,
near houses that held our wanderings hostage,
we paused on the stairs to our room, seeing one another
not as we believed, not changed or collected,
but for what we had always been,
and while the moon shook in the cage of our window
we shone from every pore with an ancient and familiar light
until the sun of the second morning found us,
naked and dreaming, restored to magnificence.

—KIMBERLY JOHNSON

little kid, I loved planes. So I decided I wanted to do something with computers and planes." At the age of fifteen, Andrew left Ghana, moving with his family to Brooklyn. He graduated from a public high school there, and, he said, "I was about to go into the Navy, but then I had this friend who was at City College who said that if I go into the Navy it will take me years to rise up but if I get a college degree I can progress much faster."

Andrew hadn't done well in high school; he had been admitted to City as a SEEK student. The prospect of college terrified him. "I thought, They're going to use all these big words," he told me. "I'm not going to know what's going on." But during the summer he had taken a full load of courses at City, and he had decided that he was college material. Now he spoke with quiet confidence. "I know I can do the work as long as I can get the time," he said. That didn't seem like an immodest hope. Andrew was a serious young man, with the immigrant's exaggerated respect for authority. After we sat talking for half an hour, he asked permission to be excused.

It took me a lot longer to manage to sit down and talk with Che. Che was the student who had said that he liked to read comic books and daydream, and there was, in fact, something childlike about him. He had big, dark eyes set in a long face, and he often seemed to be separated from the rest of the class by some sort of mental gauze. He wasn't sullen, like Curtis, or testy, like Anton; he was dreamy. Che didn't always bother to do his homework, rarely studied for quizzes, almost never betrayed signs of interest. Outside class, though, he proved to be loquacious. Che had grown up in Brooklyn. His father had left the family when Che was eight or nine. He declared that he hadn't missed his father at all, but I had to wonder.

At Samuel J. Tilden High School, Che had been the class clown—a low-grade form of Anton's rebellion. "I had this one teacher who made me sit in the front of the class to keep an eye on me," Che said rather proudly. "My economics teacher would be saying something and then he could just feel that I was going to come out with a joke or something, and before I could even open my mouth he'd say, 'Che, shut up!' " When things got intolerable, one of the teachers would call Che's mother and ask her to speak to him. "I'd be O.K. for a few weeks, and then I'd go back to the same old thing," Che said, as if describing an addiction.

Che had made it into honors classes but had done poorly, and he, too, had come to City as a SEEK student. "When I was graduating, six different teachers came up to me and said the same thing," he told me. "They said, 'Che, you're a smart kid, but you've got to get serious.' " And so Che had taken their advice to heart. He had decided that once he got to college he would simply close his mouth, and he had fulfilled his vow. He had, perhaps unconsciously, formulated a new style of disengagement. He said, "I went back to Tilden after a few weeks, and my teachers came up to me and said, 'Che, have you changed your ways?' And I said, 'Yeah, I have.' And they said, 'How are you doing?' I sort of evaded that question."

Che realized that he had somehow made another wrong move. He wasn't doing well in his other courses, and he saw that Rudi didn't believe he was taking College Skills seriously. Che thought that that was unfair, but he seemed to have no idea of what was required of a college student. Nor did he seem to grasp the peril he was in. He missed class on the day of a test—the subway broke down—and then came in so late the next day that Rudi couldn't talk to him or give him a makeup test. I asked Che if he was keeping up with the reading, and he said that he did most of it on the subway. I said I wondered whether he could really concentrate in a rattling, crowded subway car. "I can't study when it's silent," he said.

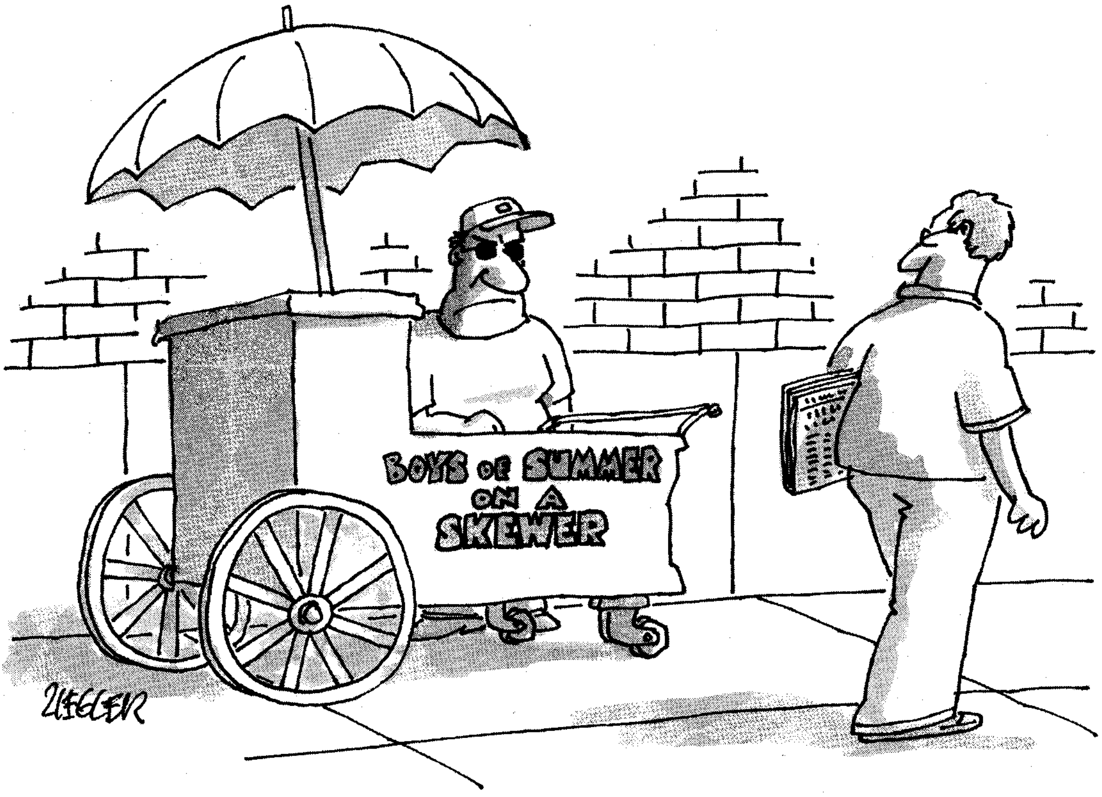
IN late September, with the leaves beginning to scuttle around the maple trees in the quadrangle just beyond Harris Hall, Rudi gave his first major exam. He asked the students to define eighteen roots and use each of them in a word, to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words from roots, to rearrange the scrambled paragraphs of a passage into a logical sequence, and to demonstrate the proper use of an outline, which was something he had dwelled on with special care. I dropped by Rudi's office the day after the test and found him sitting behind his desk with the tests splayed out in front of him. When I asked how the students had done, he picked up a sheaf of papers with an angry jerk and waved them at me. He had had some hopes for the class, but now he felt the first stirrings of despair.

Stephen and Paul, two of the three Chinese students in the class, had got 90s. Anton had scored an 86. But Che, Curtis, and Andrew had scored in the 60s. Though Rudi had been going over the same ground again and again, losing time in preference to losing students, sixteen of the twenty-three students who took the test had scored under 70, and four under 50. Rudi was in a state. "What really upsets me is how many of these kids have no *idea* what's going on," he said. "What am I supposed to say to them? That you're not going to make it? I guess I should. Look—look at this one." He thrust Simeon's paper at me. Simeon was the opposite of the back-row crowd. He sat in the front of the class and talked without stopping, frequently driving the other students nuts. Simeon had missed almost every single root. His outline was meaningless. "His problem is that he can't *read*," Rudi said. "It's clear that he has dyslexia. But he won't deal with it. Now look at this one." Margaret, the thirty-eight-year-old, had got a 29. She had done fine on language, but she simply had no idea what the subject of a paragraph was, or what the difference was between a generalization and a detail. She hadn't learned the method of writing outlines or even what outlines did.

Rudi put the papers back on his desk and ran a hand through his hair, which seemed to have been flattened by thousands of such anxious gestures over the years. He said, "The problem is that these kids are coming out of high school damaged. It's not just that they haven't learned properly, or that they haven't taken the right courses. You've got these kids who are so passive they get a 10 or 20 on an exam, and I tell them to come in and see me, but I never see them. What are they thinking? What do they think is going to happen to them?"

Rudi's anguish was genuine. Whatever Rudi thought about the mass, he believed devoutly in the individual. Every time I went to visit him in his office, I found students from other classes and other years waiting outside or coming in to borrow books or a typewriter, to pick up a reference for a job, to talk about a paper Rudi had volunteered to read for another class, or just to drink up Rudi's fortifying broth of praise and support and tough love. It was the good students—or, at least, the survivors—who kept coming back. He knew about their brothers and sisters and boyfriends and girlfriends, and their hopes and worries. Rudi was the only teacher many of these students could turn to for help, and he knew it. He left his home, in New Jersey, at dawn four days a week in order to reach the campus by seven, so that he could meet with students before classes began. And he spent about twenty dollars a week calling them from his home. He was an intense, passionate, uncompromising man; for a German, he seemed awfully Mediterranean.

Early the previous spring, Rudi had



written a memo to his superior, Alan Fiellin, the Dean of General Education and Guidance, in which all the dammed-up feeling came cascading out.

> There is a fire in my gut that tells me that what we are doing has little to do with education. Or learning. Or teaching. Something has gone wrong here, and the student who arrives at our door with a fourth-grade reading level, and the administrator who herds him into a CSK [College Skills] class of twenty-five students, and the professor who teaches that course, and the committee who designed it, and the curriculum committee which approved it are all locked into a silent contract of fraud.
>
> When I document in my CSK 2.0 class [the higher of the two remedial levels] less than 20% of the students can understand the headline "STUDENT TURNOUT NIL AT GAMES," I am met with a sympathetic wall of silence. I am told that we are caught in force fields not of our own making—"black holes" in the educational sky named politics, the Board of Higher Education, rotten high schools, dinosaur administrations and racism. But by what sort of mental alchemy can we justify our silence? . . .
>
> I know, you ask for statistics. But I will not succumb to academic dust-grubbing. Instead I think of students once in my care: Sharon, Tisha, Frank, Yolanda, Elizabeth, Andrew, Novena, Lorna, Getulio, Soledad, Ying-Li, Horatio, Marshall, Marie, Nicole, Lucian, Ali, Fel, Ramon, John, Mac, Ginger, "Tiger," Gina. All are gone now. Who knows where. All failed. Broken by our silence. . . .
>
> I somehow can't face the thought of looking at City College and seeing instead of a university a poorly run Junior High School.
>
> Can you understand my pain?

Dean Fiellin, who had been an administrator since the dawn of open admissions and was by nature a diplomat, responded more or less as Rudi had expected. "While I might define the issues somewhat differently, I do, nevertheless, share with you and others an interest in clearly identifying the deficiencies in the existing system and proposing viable solutions to the appropriate authorities," he wrote, and he proposed the compiling of a "report." He did suggest that such a report might compel CUNY "to reëxamine both realistically and compassionately our admissions procedures and our standards."

Rudi then tried to convene a conference of remedial teachers, but nobody was interested.

RUDI didn't just empathize with his students; he identified with them—perhaps to a dangerous degree.

"Actually, I wear two hats."

One day, after another set of dismal test results, he stood in front of the blackboard and, in the urgent and plaintive tones that I was hearing more and more often, said, "The strange thing is, I see *me* in *you*. I see my working class in you. What do I mean by working class? None of my people went to college—none—ever! The highest anyone ever went was eighth grade. The system didn't *want* me there. And it doesn't want *you* either. It doesn't know what to do with difference. But that means you have to fight *so damn hard* to get even with the system. So if I'm emotional maybe it's because I'm talking about *me*."

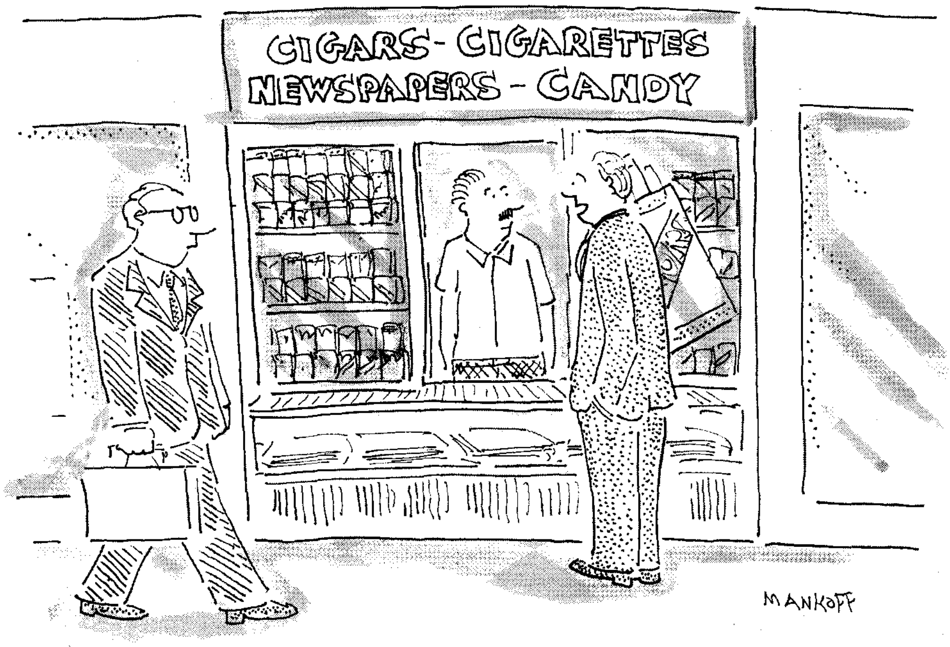
Rudi was something like them, but he was more like earlier generations of City students. Born in 1934, he had grown up outside Hamburg, a tough, smart working-class kid who played soccer and hung out on the docks. At ten, he was inducted into the Hitler Youth, and he and his pals would swagger around singing rousing tunes like "Jew Heads Roll in the Gutter." Then Hamburg was obliterated by bombing, and the war ended, and the Allies came. One day, the G.I.s gathered the townspeople to watch film clips of the death camps. "I remember a lot of the guys were laughing," Rudi says. "I just came out of there crying." Rudi thus had early in life the educational experience of scales falling from his eyes. Disillusionment was to become something of a motif for him.

Right after the war ended, when he was fourteen, Rudi was shunted off into the apprentice system, as his father had been and his father before him. Apprenticeship in Germany stretches back to the medieval era of the guilds; by Rudi's time, it had taken on a meritocratic gloss, but it was in fact a caste system. "It was a world where you never moved," he said. "You didn't even try; you knew you'd only get shat on if you did." Rudi was not about to accept the harness as meekly as his ancestors had, and yet the system was not altogether onerous. Vocational training was not a diluted form of education but, rather, a specialized one. Rudi went to trade school one day a week, where, as an apprentice carpenter, he learned physics and math. "I could have walked through an introductory college physics course and laughed at it," he said. And the remainder of Rudi's education was filled in by a fellow-worker. "He was a guy with a big, round head, and he came over to me and said, 'You got smart eyes.' I liked that—smart eyes. This guy was a member of the Communist Party, and at lunchtime we would go out to the dock, open our lunchboxes, and talk about Karl Marx."

In 1952, Rudi boarded a ship for New York. He spoke little English when he arrived, but after three months in night school he took proficiency exams in the major subjects and passed with flying colors. To satisfy the principal of the school, he applied to City College, and in due course a letter arrived informing him, to his utter amazement, that he had been accepted. Rudi loves to recall his first sighting of City's Gothic spires. One morning he told the class, "When I got to the bottom of the hill and looked up, and I saw that beautiful campus, I cried. I could not believe that a person like me, an immigrant, could go to college."

For all that, Rudi quickly contracted a case of intellectual alienation. He dropped out of City after a year and joined the Army. But he later returned, and graduated in 1959. He then entered a Ph.D. program in English at Columbia, but, again, he dropped out after a year. Graduate school brought out the Eric Hoffer in Rudi—the left-wing, working-class scorn for intellectual niceties. "I couldn't balance a teacup on my knee and talk at the same time" was how he put it, sneeringly. Rudi began teaching at a reading clinic, and found that that satisfied his need to do something concrete and useful. He also found that he was good at it. He became a student of developmental psychology and reading theory. And, in 1970, after knocking around for a decade, he returned to City College to be a teacher, just as the college was gearing up to handle the huge influx of remedial students.

Rudi was a solitary man, and perhaps a lonely one. He had married in 1962 and had two sons, but his wife had died in 1982, and now both boys were out of the house. He had been, at various times, a coffeehouse poet and an amateur philosopher, but nothing had really come of it. He had written some textbooks, but scholarly production was not his thing. At some point, Rudi seems to have accepted the fact that he would never satisfy his intellectual ambitions. Perhaps a residue of disappointment disturbed the clarity of his soul, yet the acceptance was real: he loved teaching, and he loved his students.



"Oh, just give me a pack of whatever the guys in marketing are targeting for jerks like me."

• •

BY about halfway through the term, the class had separated into a very small group that didn't need much help, a large group that desperately needed help, and a third, almost equally sizable group, which seemed beyond help. Among those at the top was Stephen, who, like many male Chinese students at City College, was single-mindedly pursuing an engineering degree. Slightly less successful was Paul, a shy boy who peeked out from under a sheaf of straight black hair. One day, I caught up with Paul as we were both coming from the subway. I asked him about his family. "It's hard for me to talk to my parents," he said. "They've been here thirty years, but they don't really speak English, and I don't speak Chinese. I have to use a lot of hand signals and stuff."

It was a fine day in mid-October, and the sun was lighting up the splendid brownstones that line Convent Avenue between 145th and 142nd Streets. Paul plodded along beneath his own private cloud. He told me that he was barely on speaking terms with his older brother and sister, though they, like him, lived at home. He hadn't had many friends in high school, either. "Mostly, I would go to school, come home, do my homework, and go to sleep," Paul said. "I wasn't very active." On his questionnaire Paul had described what he hoped to get out of City College: "I like to be able to express myself and build up my self confidence without everyone condescending on me." Paul was still intensely self-conscious. He often knew the answer to one of Rudi's questions, he said, but couldn't bring himself to blurt it out, or even to raise his hand. To listen to Paul, you would think there was an intense competition for class speaking time.

Rudi felt that many of his students suffered from depression, and Paul appeared to be one of them. He had also written on his questionnaire, "Music plays a big part in my life. This is the only thing in my life now that's worth something. Music takes me to another world—my world and in this world only good things happen. Theres no worry at home, school or at work." Now Paul was taking a piano class, but since he didn't have a piano at home he had to visit a friend's place in order to practice. He was also taking fencing classes, just because fencing was new and different. Maybe it allowed him to express aggression in an acceptable form. In his first bout, he actually knocked over a kid from Yale—an act that seemed like a fine working-class response to the aristocratic etiquette of the sport. Paul seemed, in his tentative way, to be responding to the stimulus of the new. He said that he wanted to go into advertising, but really didn't know much about it and didn't particularly like to write.

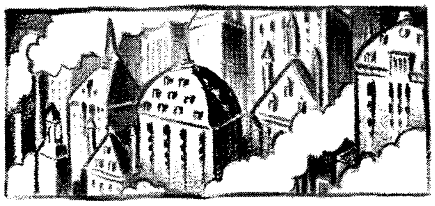
Paul always sat right behind Yvonne, another one of the better students. They never spoke, since Yvonne was almost as shy as Paul. She was a slight girl with a dazzling smile. She had gone to school in Guyana until the eleventh grade, when her family moved to New York. She had a solid base in an English-style educational system. So did Andrew, but Yvonne's schooling had lasted two or three years longer. She was much more conscientious than Andrew. I talked to her in the library one afternoon, and she spoke with wonder about the atmosphere of DeWitt Clinton High School, where she had got her diploma. "It was so violent, and everyone was running around and almost crazy," Yvonne said. "I didn't feel comfortable there."

Yvonne never did quite as well as Stephen or Paul on her exams, but her confidence grew as she realized that the work was easy for her. One day toward the end of the semester, Paul called Yvonne at home to ask if she wanted to study with him. She was stunned speechless. "Yes," she told him as soon as she had composed herself. Paul was interacting; he was overcoming his timidity. And when the two of them got together Yvonne was shocked again to see how hard Paul worked. "Sure," Rudi said, when she told him about their tête-à-tête. "Paul reads everything five times."

What was it that separated these few students in the top bracket of the class from those on the bottom? In cognitive terms, the better students were able to operate at the level of abstraction—the abstraction required to reduce a prose passage to an outline, for example—and the others were not. Did that mean that the one group was "smarter" than the other? Perhaps, by definition, it did. It certainly seemed that something irreducible, something that could be called "ability," if not "intelligence," separated the top of the class from the bottom. But except at the extremes these distinctions graded away, in Rudi's class and everywhere else I went in City College, into issues of experience, attitude, and values. City College was a place where sheer, dogged persistence, like Paul's, usually guaranteed survival and success. Only a few students arrived at City with their intellects already developed; only a few had received a really sophisticated secondary-school education. However, there were plenty of students at City who had received a solid grounding in high school and who were habituated to the disciplines of the classroom. Most of them, sadly, had grown up not in New York but in Port-au-Prince or Kingston or Santo Domingo or Shanghai. Even if they arrived at City with barely a word of English, they had a net advantage over city kids who had been haphazardly educated and, often, chaotically raised.

The larger group at the bottom of Rudi's class included students who were virtually illiterate, but in their case, too, academic ability was inextricably bound up with habits and expectations. The poorest students tended to be floaty—oddly disengaged, as if they didn't quite believe that they could control their own lives. Not only high school but life itself had taught them to be passive, at least in school. These were the students who were not only failing but refusing to accept Rudi's non-stop offers of help. Che, for example, couldn't bring himself to face his academic failures, though he understood intuitively that something was wrong. Mario, another city kid, had a plan, but it was the wrong plan: he had enrolled at City because he thought that he needed a college degree and also a graduate degree in order to work as a dental technician, whereas in fact he only needed vocational training.

Then there was Yesenia, a doll-like figure with a perfectly round face, perfectly wide eyes, and delicate, perfectly arched eyebrows. Yesenia sat in class staring dreamily at a picture of her ten-month-old daughter, Taisha, which she had taped on an inside page of her notebook. She told me that she was doing fine in class, but I knew that she was failing. (Paul, on the other hand, always thought that he was doing worse than he actually was.) Yesenia had never been to see Rudi, and she didn't even know the name of the counsellor that she had been assigned in the SEEK program. She was hoping to get a degree as a physician's assistant, but she hadn't yet asked anyone how she could get into City's special program in the field. When we had spoken for fifteen or twenty minutes, I could see that she was getting fidgety. "Usually, I go home right after class," she explained. "I have all my classes in the morning, and my babysitter finishes at one." In her mind, Yesenia was already with Taisha.



It was late October, and Rudi was going over a quiz with the class. He had included a reference to Ghana, in honor of Andrew. "By the way," he said, "where's Ghana?"

"In India," someone said.

"In South America," corrected José, who was from the Dominican Republic. "Near Venezuela." José was thinking of Guyana.

Anton turned on him with worldly contempt. "Ghana is in Africa, kid," he said.

"Oh," said Rudi. "Where in Africa?"

"Central?" Anton hazarded. "Is it coastal? I don't know."

Rudi wasn't trying to embarrass Anton, and he didn't care particularly about geography. He wanted to instill the habit of absorbing fine-grained information; he wanted the students to build up a storehouse of knowledge. He drew a time line on the board. When was Christ born? When did Columbus discover America? When was the Civil War? The students' answers were as likely to be random as right. Rudi never ceased to be appalled at his students' sheer lack of information; he felt that it was virtually impossible to think complex thoughts without a wealth of specific knowledge. One day, I suggested that the students probably knew a great deal about nonacademic subjects, and Rudi cried, "We tried that! We talked about black issues and rap music and so forth, but when you push them there's nothing there but the soft stuff. Sure, they know the names of songs and the singers, but can they *analyze*?"

Rudi agreed with E. D. Hirsch, Jr., who argued in his highly controversial book "Cultural Literacy" that "a consistent lack of necessary information can make the reading process so laborious and uncommunicative that it fails to convey meaning." Hirsch, in fact, maintained that there was no such thing as "general, transferable skills in problem solving, critical thinking or in any other field"—a claim that amounted to heresy in progressive pedagogical circles. He suggested that teachers teach information—cultural literacy—rather than developmental skills. Rudi did, of course, try to teach skills directly, but he felt that students would not be able to deploy these skills without a scaffolding of data. How could you fathom history if you had no sense of chronology? Chronology was a structure, and you needed structures to think. "Frameworks," Rudi said, in one of his emphatic one-word sentences. "*Contexts.*"

The class moved on through the term, though Rudi didn't seem to be carrying many of the students with him. After the section on Intake, Rudi discussed Storage and Retrieval, by which he meant the capacity to retain information and the ability to reproduce it in a meaningful way. Here, as before, Rudi taught techniques of learning that feel intuitive to most well-educated people but that his students, he knew, had never absorbed. He talked about the effective use of time, mnemonic tricks, and various kinds of tests. He continued to harp on the Intake skills of underlining and note-taking. Taking good notes, he said, was not a freestanding academic skill but a consequence of understanding what was primary in a lecture or a reading and grasping how ideas were related to one another.

Rudi gave the students a homework assignment: to write a three-hundred-and-fifty-word essay explaining the main points of a passage from their textbook on the traditional role of males in society. Rudi was now nudging them toward the kind of work they would be expected to do in freshman-level courses. What he got back from the students, however, showed how thoroughly unprepared most of them were for college work. "Some of these papers really hurt me," he said in class. "Why? Because you had *so many* good ideas in there, but you couldn't get them out. You couldn't do the writing."

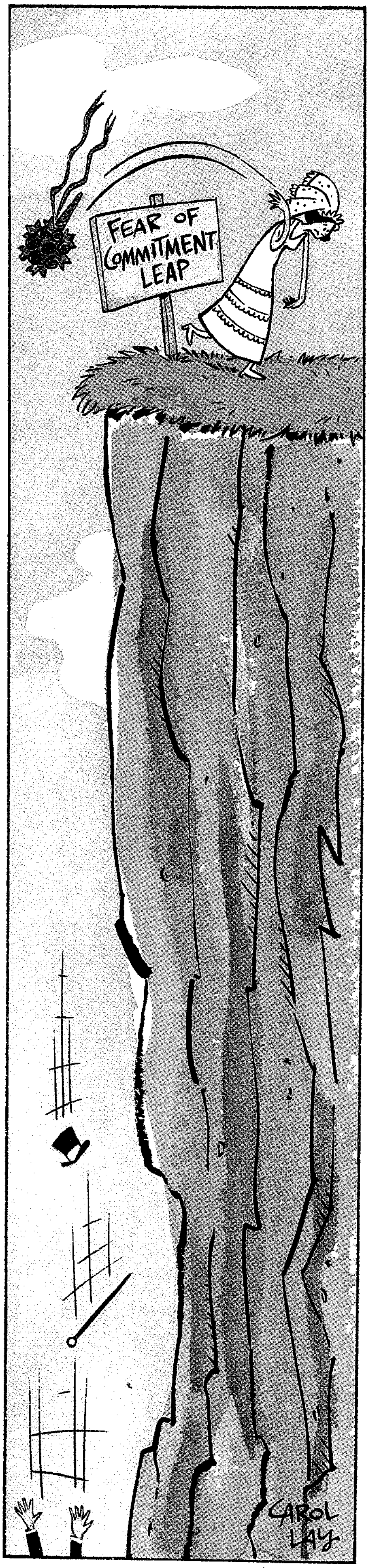
Mario virtually copied the original text. José, the Dominican student, had taken some notes, but in his paralyzed sentence structure you could see the struggle he was waging with written English. "In the American society," José had written, in a careful, upright hand, "males & females have been in a disputes for many years, because of the male role in the American society. Many females belief that 'American males have it easy.' I agree that males have it easy because man have been free to exercise legal & social powers."

The strangest essay came from Simeon. His handwriting lurched forward and back, and forward and back again, as if it were being sloshed around in a glass. Apt observations dissolved into a shapeless welter. One of his sentences read, "Where as the male by which society has played him to be the sole provider, protector, and be will to take risks concerning the wealthfare of the family." Rudi did not believe in discouraging his students, yet neither would he flatter them. "As always you have interesting and exciting ideas," he wrote on Simeon's paper, "but the grammar, spelling and organization need a lot of work. We will have to work together on this."

Simeon was in fact a highly intelligent young man. He knew things about the larger world, like what Greenpeace was, and the geodesic dome, and sadomasochism, and even supply-side economics. He seemed to remember everything he had ever heard. And his gifts were not merely mechanical; he understood intuitively how to formulate concepts. When Rudi asked whether it is possible to have memories that predate the acquisition of language, Simeon said that he thought not, "because you wouldn't have any words to describe it to yourself."

And yet, despite his intelligence, Simeon flunked nearly every exam he took in Rudi's class, often by a mile. He could absorb an individual concept but not the over-all concept of organization. He appeared to be a living refutation of Hirsch's theory that knowledge of specifics produces general skills. In effect, Simeon could function only on an oral level. He suffered from a sort of verbal compulsion. Simeon sat directly in front of Rudi and shouted answers before Rudi finished his questions. "Do you know what this means?" Rudi would ask, and Simeon would say, "Yeah, yeah," as if it were the most obvious thing in the world, and then fire off a wild guess.

Simeon refused to acknowledge any



THE ASTRONOMICAL HEN

Like hearts marked out but not yet colored in,
each one of her feathers has a black edge,
as if an India-ink mantilla stretched

from uncleaved neck to her fantail. The pen,
homemade, spilled some darkness now and then.
She doesn't lack for suitors. Poor rooster,

who pours his own loud heart out to her,
surely his begging does no more than force
her to peck out a crooked tattoo in the dirt

of the pen. Is she stumped, sad, anorexic?
It's perfectly clear she doesn't lay eggs.
Can it be she's simply in love with herself?

Her eye obsidian, eye of the world,
at night she watches the stars drop from shelf
to shelf, to minor études she unfurls

in her head. By day she hunts and re-pecks
the pinprick holes of her intricate sketch.
If she's done by dusk the first stars can rise.

—Cynthia Zarin

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problems with his reading, even though Rudi still thought that he was dyslexic. As with Che, it was impossible to tell whether Simeon recognized the peril that he was in. He had long since learned to use his gift of gab to mask his problems, probably even from himself. Until now, he had breezed his way through school. Simeon had gone to a vocational school that was undemanding even by New York City standards. "We were supposed to read books, but you didn't have to," Simeon said. "The exam was just about the plot of the book, and I could remember that from what the teacher said. I considered it like a sin to study."

IN the middle of the term, Rudi gave an exam on note-taking. He had asked the students to read and take notes at home on five passages that he had handed out. The exam covered the material they had read; they were allowed to use their notes. In years past, Rudi had given the exam in one class session; now he was stretching it over two periods, since students had complained that it took them too long to read the notes they had taken. The day after the second session, when the students shuffled down the dingy basement hallway of Harris and into the class, they found that Rudi had written an equation on the blackboard: "I'm overworked + I'm underloved + your tests = I'm hurting." "Hurting" was a word that Rudi used a great deal; he pronounced it, owing to remaining traces of a German accent, without the "r."

This almost abject confession shattered several classroom taboos: Don't sacrifice your authority. Don't call attention to yourself. Don't lay a guilt trip on your students. But Rudi felt he had to let them know that it was safe to open up, to connect, to allow themselves to be engaged by school. It was they, Rudi thought, who were underloved. "A lot of you don't know how to be loved," he had said. Again and again, he had invited them to come to his office for help, with the class or with anything else. And they had not come, or they had sat across from him and pretended that everything was fine. Maybe the whole idea of having an emotional bond with a sixty-year-old teacher with a German accent struck them as weird.

The real source of Rudi's hurt was a column on the right-hand side of the board: the range of the exam scores. Even after getting twenty free points simply for having shown that they had read the passages he had assigned, no one had gotten so much as a 90. Four students had scored 80 or above, four more had scored 70 or above, and ten others who took the test had come in below 70—three of them in the 20s. Throughout the semester, Rudi had been hinting at his growing dismay; now, as he had done when he wrote his memo to the dean, he opened the sluice gates. He pointed to the numbers on top, his tweed jacket hiking up on his arm, and said, "These scores here are on standard. What does that mean? That once these students left College Skills and went out into the college they would be average students—65, 70, 75, maybe a bit stronger. What looks good in here for the college at large is just what? Survival skills. But if you're starting to pull 30, 40, 50, what am I saying? *That you're just not making it.* You're not motivated enough. Those motivations may have been good enough for junior high school, but they're not good enough for college."

Rudi was pacing back and forth, his agitation mounting. He was running his hands through his hair and flipping his glasses back and forth between his brow and the tip of his nose. "When I give you a one-page test," he continued, "and you take the whole hour to read it, I say you cannot read." He looked around, and perhaps he registered the anger he had provoked. He said, "You cannot read *at the college level.* Now, how can I say that? How *dare* I say that? How dare I make such an assumption?" Rudi pointed out that all the students who did well had finished the reading in plenty of time. It was a myth, he said, that people could read equally well at any speed. Once you slowed down far enough, the context would become invisible.

"A lot of you are playing with a totally unrealistic sense of what the standards are," Rudi went on, still pacing at the front of the class. He talked about the high dropout rate and the pressures they would be facing as they left the safe harbor of remediation. "I worry about you," he said, and the hard edge of his voice softened. "I worry that some of you will not make it, and you will be worse off than when you came here. Why do I say that?"

"Self-esteem?" That was Che.

"Yes," Rudi said. "I hurt for that. I know what's down the road for you; you don't. You're dreaming. *You have got to wake up.*" Rudy wasn't shouting, but he was in a passion. Once again, he had gained complete silence. Then Rudi went back to his desk and did something I would never have expected: he read his memo to Dean Fiellin. Halfway through, incredibly, I could see that the class was wool-gathering, as if the failures that the memo discussed so brutally weren't theirs as well. But by the end, when the letter was comparing City College to a junior high school, Rudi had a gravely attentive audience.

And then Rudi talked about how he saw himself in them. He wanted them to know that he, too, had faced adversity, that he knew how hard it was, that he was on their side. He was saying that he cared about them too much to let them feed on self-delusion. And all that was true. But would the truth set them free—the truth of their own shortcomings? Or would it confirm their worst fears? After class, I rode the escalator up to Rudi's office. He looked stricken. The lines that ran from the corners of his mouth to his chin seemed to bite deeply into his flesh. "I don't know if I did the right thing," he said. "Frankly, I don't know what to do." He talked about triage, about the diminishing number of students that he felt he could save. As I was getting up to leave, he said, "What you see here is a whole system failing."

The note-taking test had produced a few tiny glimmers of good news. Curtis surprised me by reporting that he got an 81, one of the highest scores in the class. It turned out that Curtis had been paying more attention than he let on. He never deigned to speak in class, but sometimes, Rudi told me, he came up after class and asked what a word or phrase meant. Sometimes he even showed Rudi a paragraph or two that he had written. There was also a surprise in the opposite direction. Andrew, the Ghanaian immigrant, had stopped partway through the exam, writing, "Owing to personal problems, I can not finish the test." Andrew's grades on exams had been dropping to dangerous levels in recent weeks. Apparently, I had been too ready to size Andrew up, as I had been too ready to size Curtis up.

A few days later, I saw Andrew hurrying ahead of me as I was walking away from the campus to the subway. I caught up with him and asked about his route home. Andrew told me he lived in a very rough part of the South Bronx. "Most of the people I knew in school dropped out," he said. "A lot of them are selling drugs or on drugs or in jail. But I keep away from those guys. I go to school, do my work, come home. That's where my values come in." Andrew had the habit of speaking in homilies; he had staked out a role as model student and dutiful son. It was true, he said, that his life had got complicated. His parents had split up, he related, and his stepmother had turned his father against the children. Andrew had been shuttling back and forth between his father's home, in Brooklyn, where he felt unwelcome, and his mother's home, in the South Bronx. "But that's O.K.," he said. "I can deal with it."

I noticed that Andrew, who was a big, soft boy, was perspiring heavily, though it was a cold day. And as we walked down the stairs of the IND station at 145th Street and St. Nicholas, and stood on the southbound platform, Andrew finally dropped the pretense that he was O.K. "When I was in Brooklyn," he said, in the piping voice of West Africa, "I had such big ambitions for myself. I thought I would be a pilot. Now I don't know—maybe I won't even make it through college." Andrew's parents had split up soon after the family moved to New York. Andrew had been in ninth grade. "I couldn't take it," he said. "In Africa, I used to always have this hope that they would stay together, no matter what." Andrew looked out over the tracks. "I was an A student," he went on. "And the year my mother went away my average went down to 67. That's 32 points." He said it as if each point had been a dram of blood.

Now he had to be strong for his little brother and sister and for his mother. And who would look out for him? "Sometimes I sit at my table and I'm like crying inside," Andrew said. "I ask myself, 'Why me? I'm only nineteen.' I feel like I need to have my father with me, but I'm all alone." Andrew's work was

I
II
III
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Richter

suffering, not only because he found it hard—he wouldn't admit that he did—but because he could barely concentrate. That week, his parents were in court; their long-drawn-out custody battle was finally coming to a head. The pressure was almost intolerable.

Rudi felt that many of his students had no idea that they were heading for a crackup. But when he asked them, toward the end of the semester, to write an essay about themselves as college students he found that they could acknowledge on paper what they often hid from him in person. The notes of bravado, of naïve self-confidence, that many of them had sounded in their answers to his initial questionnaire were now muted, almost inaudible. College had exposed weaknesses that they had been able to ignore in the past.

Simeon wrote, in his pitching and yawing hand, "I constantly am causing my own slow self destruction. In many ways I know why I do these things or rather I say behave like I don't care about what happens to my existance. Well one way I see it is lack of motivation on my part in particular. . . . This lack of motivation sounds good but, it could just be very bad habits ones that reward bad behavior. This is also self destructive but more or less a character flaw."

Andrew wrote, "I want so much from college but I do so little. . . . When I really spend time on writing, most of the time I write beautiful essays, stories, and letters. Is just that I don't have or make time for all of this great major factors I need to be a successful student." He was hoping, he said, that tutoring "will help me study more and overcome my study disorder."

Even the pitch of ambition had become less steep since the beginning of the semester. Stephen said he hoped to become "an average middle class person." Many of the students also wrote about their language problems with a terrible candor. Janet, who was Hispanic, wrote, "I think if one person from my house (my mother, my sister or one of my two uncles) will want to come to college, I will advice them to first learn English and then come to college. Because it's to difficult to on a place where you're the only one who feels out of place." But she added, "Even though my English it's not strong I will keep on trying. Because I want to be someone important in the life and I don't want to work in a factory."

In a few of the essays you could feel the kindling of new life. Yvonne, the Guyanese immigrant, who seemed to unfold a new petal every week, wrote, "As I search myself for strengths, I couldn't find any." She had written virtually the identical sentence at the beginning of the term. Now she went on to say, "But as I search deeper and deeper I stumbled upon endurance. Even though I get frustrated very easily, I do not give up. . . . I am the first child in my family to attend college and I want to be a positive role model to my sisters and cousins. I want to show them that you can be successful and make 'big bucks,' no matter where you came from." It was Yvonne who at the beginning of the term had hungered for the Lexus and the suburban house. And she had something to prove to her father: "My father always tells me . . . that I am not confident enough about myself, I do not have the strength, eagerness and aggressiveness to fight for life. I want to show my father that I have more than what it takes to become successful."

Rudi had asked the students to edit one another's papers, and Paul, who had read Yvonne's, corrected the line to read, "I have more heart and determination to become successful than you think." Paul must have heard the words echoing inside.

Paul wrote modestly that his greatest strengths were his "ability to get to class on time" and the fact that he could "easily get along with all types of people." Then he wrote, "My weaknesses overweighs my strengths when it comes to studying. My first weakness is that I get easily distracted when I study. If I hear a good song on the radio, I would stop to listen." In the margin Yvonne wrote, "Turn the radio off." Paul concluded with the reflection "To be successful in life or in college, you must set goals for yourself. In order to accomplish these goals, it must not be set too high." Yvonne underlined the last phrase and drew an arrow to her comment: "Doesn't make sense."

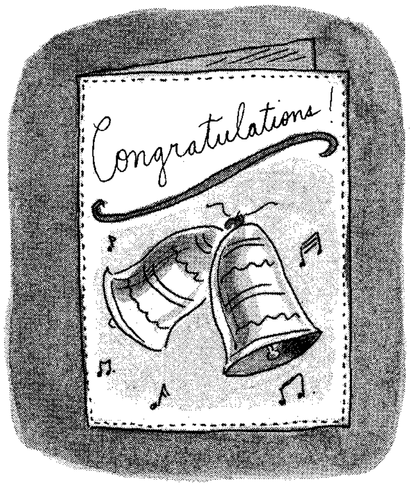
THE premise of College Skills was that students could learn critical thinking in a semester or two. At the end of the course, they were simply expected to read at what the placement test defined as "college level." The remedial ideal assumed that such a transformation was possible, and not just occasionally but regularly. City was expected not only to enroll students with profound academic problems but to cure those problems. Rudi obviously had not succeeded; many of his students could still barely make sense of a simple passage. And it wasn't Rudi's fault, or City College's fault. They were both laboring under a set of impossible expectations.

In the final weeks of the term, students began to sort themselves out. Yesenia stopped coming to class. One day, she dropped by Rudi's office with her baby, Taisha, but she refused to be drawn into conversation. Rudi never saw her again. Simeon announced that he would not be in college much longer—he was enlisting full time in the military. Mario turned out to be flunking most of his classes. Aisha, who had a soft spot for Mario, was sitting in the library with him and taking him to see his academic adviser. She led him around as if he were an overgrown puppy.

A strange thing happened with Curtis. One day, Rudi said, he had come storming into Rudi's office after class, closed the door behind him, and begun complaining bitterly about the grade on his most recent quiz. Rudi said, "Open the door, and sit down, and then we'll talk." Curtis opened the door an inch. Rudi, still sitting calmly behind his desk, said, "Don't try to pull that physical stuff on me." Curtis pushed the door open and sat down, still glowering. Rudi talked to him for a minute and then said, "Come back and talk to me when you've calmed down." And, in fact, Curtis came back that afternoon, and Rudi discovered that on the quiz Curtis had faithfully reproduced the information from his notes, but that the notes themselves were all wrong. Rudi and Curtis had a rational conversation. Curtis was not about to give Rudi a hug, but he might allow himself to be reached.

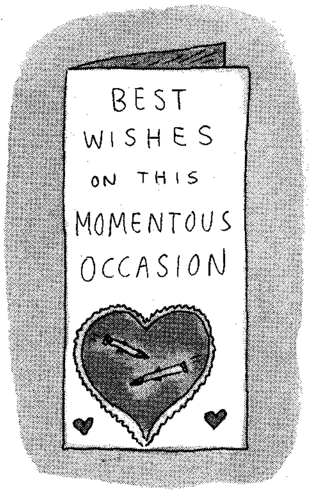
On the last day of class, Anton seemed possessed by some private fury. Aisha bent over him solicitously. Rudi said, "Anton is full of rage today. We're back where we started." Then Rudi talked about the final, saying that he would count it only if it improved a student's over-all grade. And he admitted that midway through the term he had given up on their vocabulary work.

CLIP 'N' SEND CARDS FOR LOCKHEED AND MARTIN MARIETTA


Congratulations!

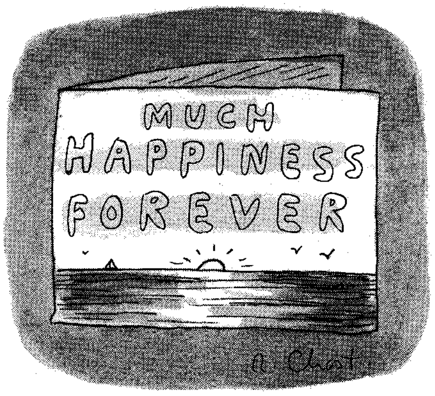
A match that was in Heaven made
'Twixt titans of the armament trade,
Good luck on this most special day –
We really are just blown away.

~ Some people standing out here in the open.


BEST WISHES ON THIS MOMENTOUS OCCASION

One of you can be the mom,
The other can be the dad.
Delivering the smartest bomb
Would make our hearts so glad.

~ A person who means no harm whatsoever.



When budgets are lean
And you're feeling blue,
Be there for each other
And you'll both pull through.

~ An individual with your best interests at heart.

• •

"This is the first time ever have I pulled out of vocabulary development," he told the class, in one of his occasional oddly sequenced sentences. "You remember what happened? Whenever we talked about vocabulary development, you all sat there like this." He slumped into a chair with his arms folded across his chest. "I thought, Does it really make sense to keep going with this stuff if that's the way you feel?"

Rudi's chastisement modified itself, bit by bit, into a plea. "Gang," he said, "you've got to reach out a little more. Any student I've worked with even once is my student—they're my family." He invited them all, again, to come to him for help. "You know what a tough guy I am, but when I go to graduation and I see my students I cry a little bit inside." He talked once again about the need to accept love, to be hugged. The students snickered and made some jokes, and Rudi clenched his broad jaw and said, "Damn it, I lost my point." He was dead serious; he wanted to hold on to the emotion. He wanted to leave them with something real. And so, as the class, and the term, were coming to an end, Rudi told a story that lightly summed up the conflict that he had wrestled with for twenty years. "A few years ago," he said, sitting on the edge of his desk, "I went on a sabbatical, and I was sailing across the Atlantic. And I was out there under the moon, bailing water, throwing up, and I suddenly thought, What the hell is So-and-So doing? Has she graduated? Is she making it? And that's what made me come back to the college."

RUDI did not like giving out grades. He knew of another remedial-class teacher who had passed all twenty-two of his students. But that seemed to Rudi not so much an act of generosity as an act of surrender. To pass everyone was to accept with a shrug the situation he had described in his memo. Rudi cared too much about the college simply to rubber-stamp the papers of students who could barely read. But he also cared too much about the students to block their passage forward unless he felt that he had no choice at all. And so he negotiated with himself, and sometimes tortured himself, and erred on the side of generosity.

Rudi had developed a system he called "the contract." He would pass a student with the proviso that he or she would work with him during the following semester. As long as a student made the commitment to improve, Rudi would give that student a passing grade—a C. If not, he would change the grade to F or to R, for "repeat." Normally, Rudi gave out three or four contracts per class. This time, though, he gave contracts, with C grades, to six students, including Che, Andrew, and Margaret. Margaret clearly belonged in the lower-level class, College Skills 1.0—she had been placed in Rudi's class by a clerical error—and Rudi offered to give her a passing grade if she would attend College Skills 1.0, pass the course, and then pass the reading-assessment test.

Rudi considered F a punitive grade, and almost never gave one out. Nor did he normally hand out D's. But he gave seven students an R, including Mario and Simeon. It was not that Rudi felt they were less able than the students whom he had put on contract; it was more that they hadn't made a serious enough effort to survive. They hadn't reached out. Rudi awarded only two A's—to Stephen and Paul. He gave B's to Yvonne, Aisha, Anton, Curtis, and two other students. Rudi was delighted with his few success stories. But, what with the R's and the five students who had withdrawn along the way, twelve of the twenty-six students who'd begun with him in September would not be receiving credit for the course. And Rudi wondered if even that ruinous casualty rate was high enough. "If I made a decision in terms of what College Skills ought to be, then two or maybe three students would have passed," Rudi said. All the others had such rudimentary skills or such poor study habits that he feared they would not survive City College.

It was possible that Rudi's predictions would prove too dire. City could be a very forgiving place. Simeon's remedial-English teacher, incredibly, had given him an A. Rudi had been seeing more and more students waved through the school's gates. Finally, he had sent a letter to the head of the English Composition program: "Attached please find copies of essays a student wrote during the final week of my CSK 2.0 class. This same student passed her English 110 course"—freshman composition—"with an A." The essays were on the level of Margaret's or Mario's, which is to say that they were semiliterate. "How is it done?" Rudi asked in the letter. "With mirrors?" This was what Rudi meant when he said, "The whole system is failing." Kids were coming out of high school more deeply troubled than they had before, emotionally as well as academically. A stable family had become an anomaly; depression had become the norm. The number of students with severe language problems was increasing. And the system, as far as Rudi could see, was adapting itself to lower and lower levels of achievement.

He estimated that the average reading level in his College Skills 2.0 class had sunk in recent years from ninth or tenth grade to seventh or eighth grade. And these students were passing through College Skills and then being waved through English 110.

Still, it was statistically unlikely that more than a quarter or so of Rudi's students would ultimately graduate from City College. They were beginning in a deep remedial hole, and only a few of them had the sheer drive and persistence, and perhaps the faith in themselves, required to slog through. Many of them seemed to be balanced on a knife edge. In mid-May, at the end of the spring semester, I happened to see Andrew in the student lounge. He was sitting by himself on a couch, his hands resting limply in his lap. I asked him if he had kept his half of the contract by working with Rudi. "I've just been so busy," Andrew said. "At the beginning of the semester, I said I was going to go see him, and then I never had the time."

I had the sickening feeling that Andrew was slipping away, and I said sternly, "You've *got* to go see Professor Gedamke. He means it when he says he wants to help you."

"I know, I know," Andrew said, giving me his ever-obedient smile. He promised to see him when the fall semester began. Andrew had said the same thing to Rudi every time they saw each other: "I'm busy, I'm coming." Rudi hadn't decided whether he would let Andrew keep the C he had given him or would convert the grade to an Incomplete, which would compel Andrew to take the course again. In the fall, he would sit down with Andrew's SEEK counsellor to thrash it out. Of the six students whom Rudi had put on contract, three had worked with him at least sporadically during the spring, and he had made their C's permanent. Che, the quiet, dreamy-eyed kid who sat in the far corner, had never shown up at all. And Margaret, the older woman who could barely read or write, had withdrawn from City College.

When I asked Andrew how the past semester had gone, he flipped his hands back and forth in a gesture that meant "Not so hot"—a sign that things must have been very bad indeed. "I had to drop Chem 103," he said abjectly. "I was always falling behind, and I couldn't catch up. I think I should have studied more." Andrew admitted that he might also have got no more than a C in geometry. And then he embarked on a lecture on the virtues of hard work and discipline which I had heard him deliver before.

I asked Andrew about his family.

"Everything's fine," he said emphatically. "I just don't see my father anymore." I murmured, "I'm sorry," and Andrew flared up. "I don't care. He doesn't want to have anything to do with us, and that's fine with me." He sounded petulant, and his petulance felt like the thinnest cover for fear and hurt. And then he started in on another sermonette, this one about self-reliance.

When he finished, I said, "Good luck, Andrew," and Andrew flashed me his nervous, overeager smile.

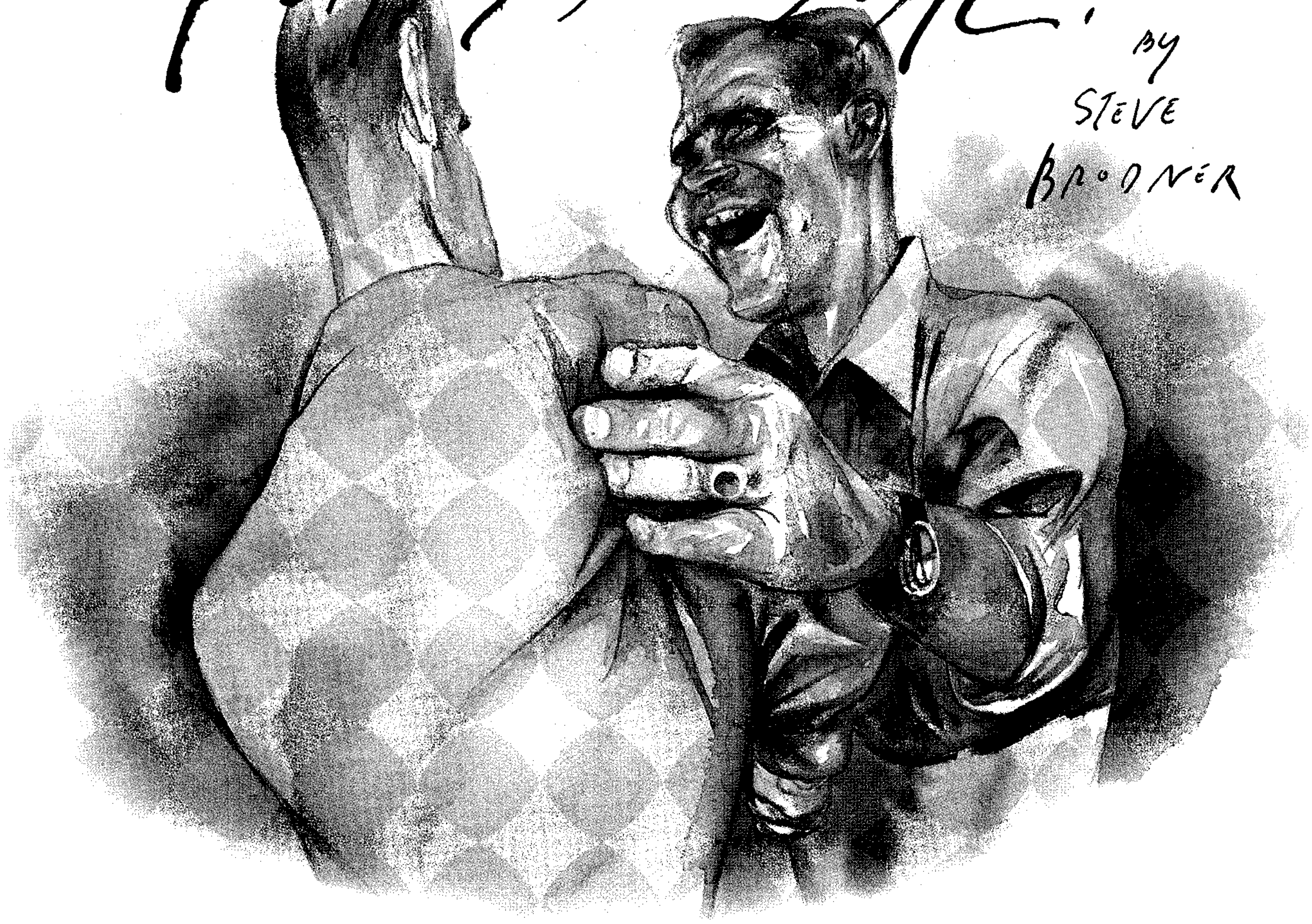
I happened to walk by the lounge about two hours later. And there was Andrew, still sitting with his big hands in his lap, his eyes unfocussed.

RUDI had been an angry young man and a teen-age Marxist and an enemy of privilege. Now, to his surprise, he found himself mounting the ramparts of "standards." He was attaining a prophetic bitterness in his old age. "We're validating a kind of illiteracy by giving degrees out," Rudi said one afternoon as I sat in his cramped, paper-strewn office. "We can do all the finger-pointing at the high schools. The problem is, we're doing the same thing." Rudi wanted to tell students like Mario to go to vocational school, no matter how undemocratic, inegalitarian, and élitist such advice might sound. He believed in vocational education, even though he hated the class system that it helped to support. Above all, he wanted to find *something* that would help kids whom he felt that he was failing. "What is the phrase for doctors?" he asked. " 'Do no harm'? Maybe we should adopt that. Because I wonder if we aren't doing more harm than good. When these kids don't make it here, it's a confirmation of themselves as nonstudents, as failures." I wasn't sure that that was true, and Rudi himself was only guessing. But the students who dropped out certainly weren't being helped.

Rudi sometimes talked about quitting to join the Peace Corps. He also thought, if not very seriously, about teaching junior high school. And he worried, often, that he had become complicit in a failed system. Rudi was a succinct man, and he summed up his view of the world as follows: "The great problem with this society is that we don't give a shit about our children. That's where the problem lies. And by the time they get up here it's too late." ♦

POLITICS AS USUAL?

By Steve Brodner



In Virginia, it's a four-way race for senator: Charles Robb, the Democratic incumbent, former governor, and L.B.J. son-in-law; Douglas Wilder, independent and former Democratic governor; Marshall Coleman, independent and former Republican state attorney general; and, of course, Oliver North, ex-marine and former Iran-Contra defendant, and the Republican Party nominee.

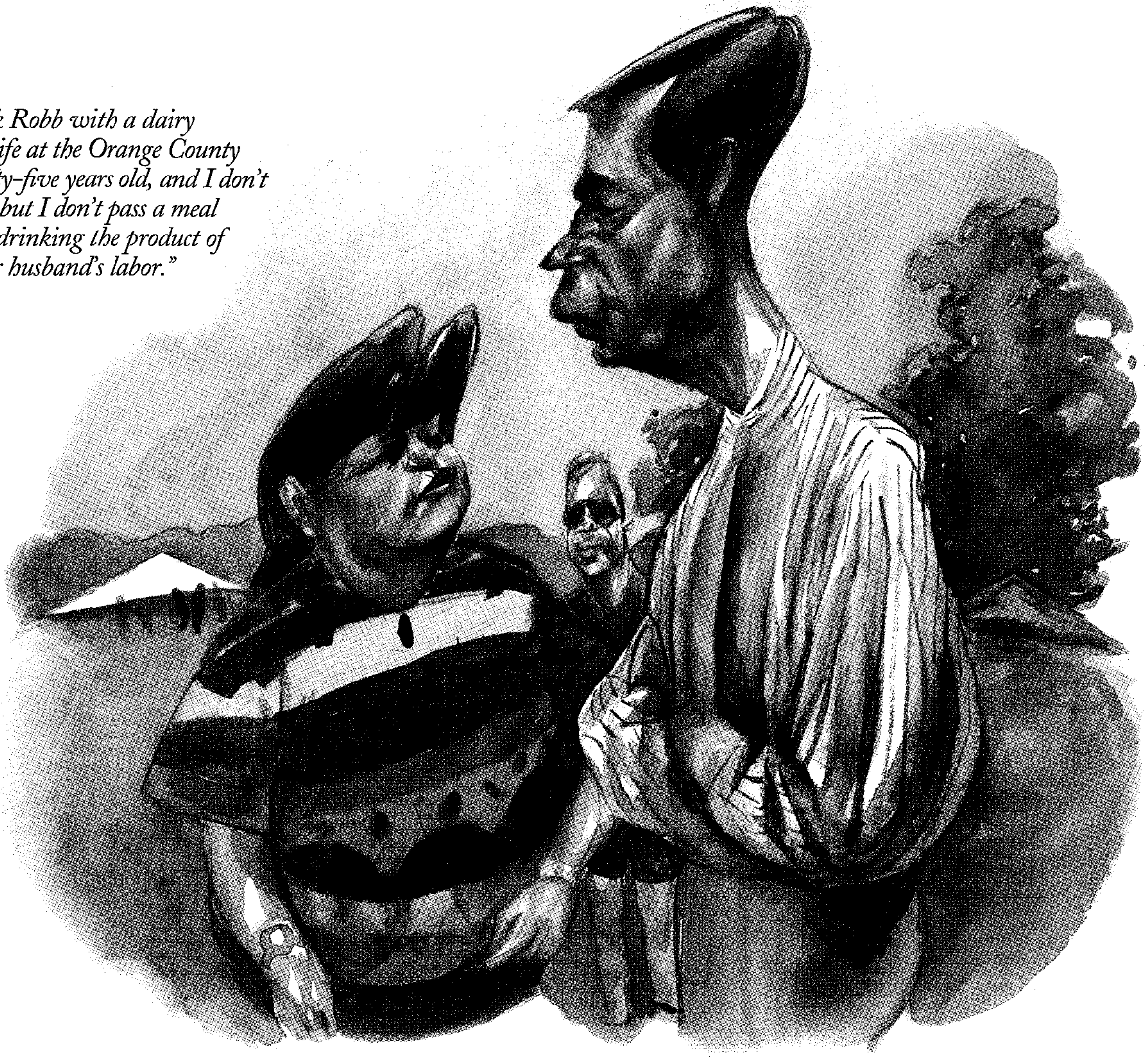
"The Christian Coalition is pictured in the media as being unstable, irresponsible right-wingers. But Oliver North seems very calm and very reasonable."
—Nancy M. Hoover, hairdresser.

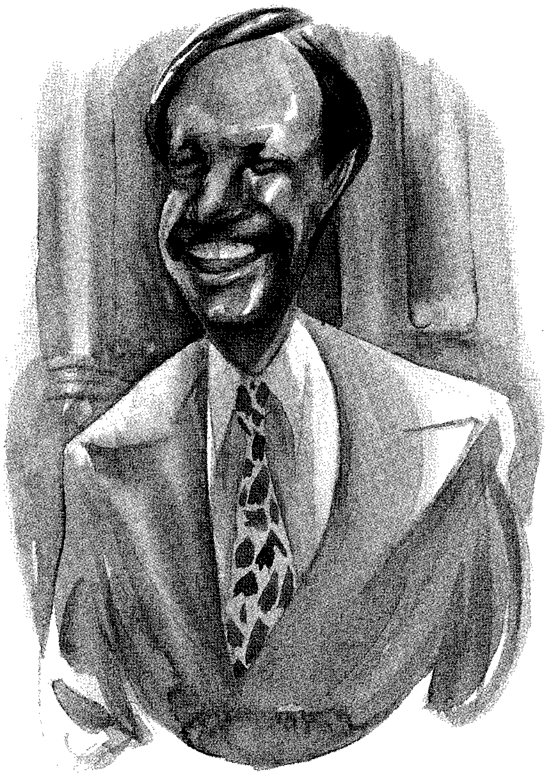
OLLIE NORTH

"Chuck Robb is too dumb to be a senator."
—Dan Smith, insurance agent.

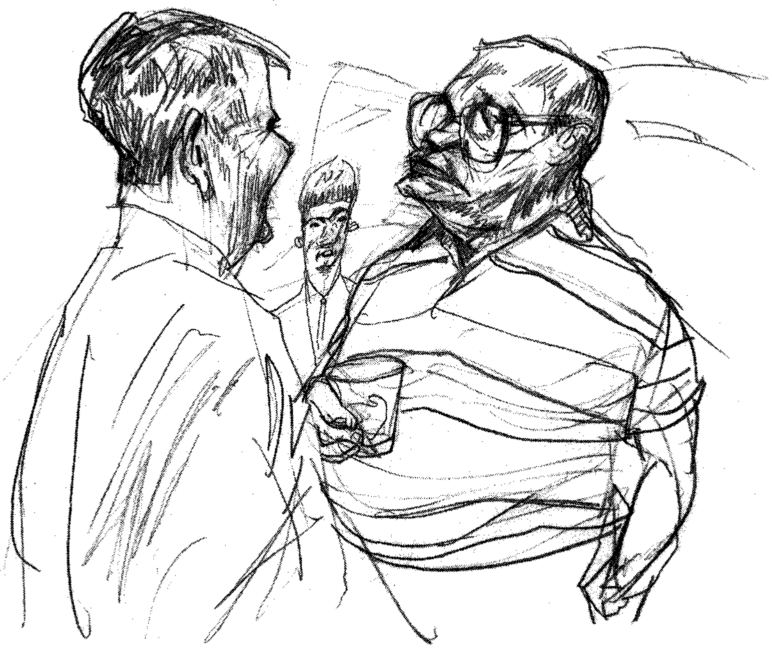
"North earned a lot of my respect during the Iran-Contra hearings, because he was one of the few who were honest."
—Katherine Wilbur, clerk.

Chuck Robb with a dairy farmer's wife at the Orange County Fair: "I'm fifty-five years old, and I don't have to, but I don't pass a meal without drinking the product of your husband's labor."





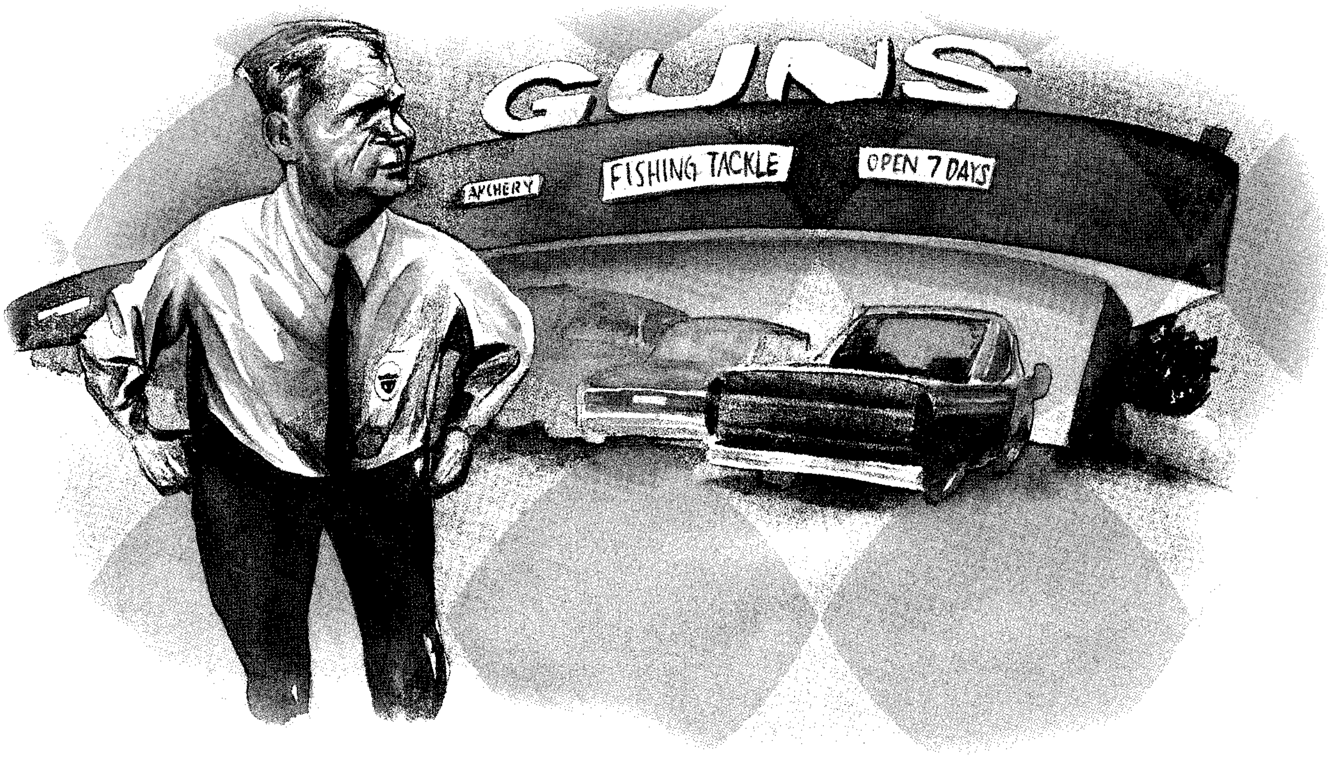
Marshall Coleman: "The people know I'm 'None of the Above.' And that's a big advantage."



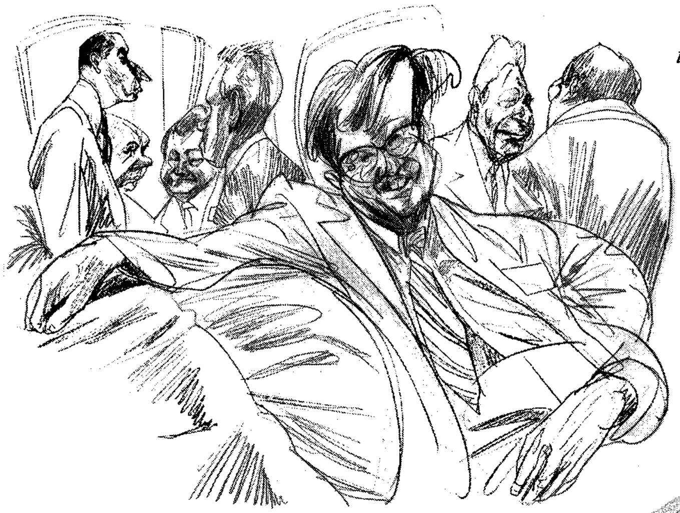
Northern Neck, a stop on the Oliver North bus tour.

Supporter: "You got my vote. My wife does not like homosexuals, period. I was on a destroyer four years. We can't have those people on the destroyers."

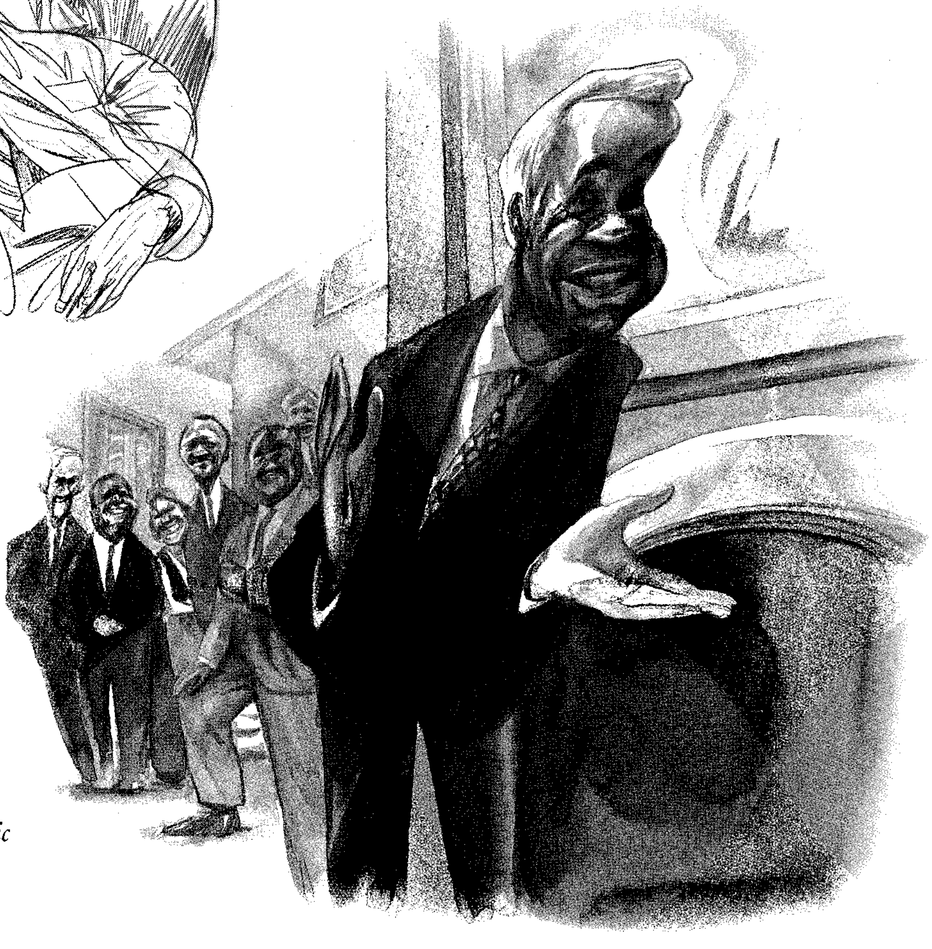
North: "Can't have 'em on amphibs. Can't have 'em on battleships. There are no private staterooms."



*"Ollie North has a flak-jacket company and wants everybody to have a gun. Well, I guess he'll benefit if everybody buys a flak jacket. But I don't want to wear a flak jacket to go grocery shopping."
—Gordon E. Burgess, lifetime member of the N.R.A.*



Arnold Salzberg, surgeon, at a Douglas Wilder fund-raiser outside Richmond: "What would we be doing tonight if he weren't running? Our lives would be dull, uninteresting."

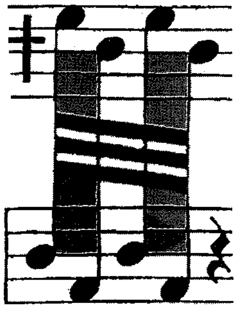


With eight weeks until the election, Wilder remains in the race, which guarantees a split in the Democratic vote. North—amply financed and an increasingly skilled campaigner—is the man to beat.

FICTION

INTERFERENCE

BY JULIAN BARNES



HE longed for death, and he longed for his gramophone records to arrive. The rest of life's business was complete. His work was done; in years to come it would be either forgotten or praised, depending upon whether mankind became more, or less, stupid. His business with Adeline was done, too: most of what she offered him now was foolishness and sentimentality. Women, he had concluded, were at base conventional: even the free-spirited were eventually brought down. Hence that repellent scene the other week. As if one could want to be manacled at this stage, when all that was left was a final, lonely soaring.

He looked around his room. The gramophone stood in the corner, a monstrous varnished lily. The wireless had been placed on the washstand, from which the jug and bowl had been removed: he no longer rose to rinse his wasted body. A low basketwork chair, in which Adeline would sit for far too long, imagining that if she enthused enough about the pettinesses of life he might discover a belated appetite for them. A wicker table, on which sat his spectacles, his medicines, Nietzsche, and the latest Edgar Wallace. A writer with the profligacy of some minor Italian composer. "The lunchtime Wallace has arrived," Adeline would announce, tirelessly repeating the joke he had told her in the first place. The Customs House at Calais appeared to have no difficulty allowing the lunchtime Wallace through. But not his "Four English Seasons." They wanted proof that the records were not being imported for commercial purposes. Absurd! He would have sent Adeline to Calais had she not been needed here.

His window opened to the north. He thought of the village nowadays solely in terms of nuisance. The butcher lady with her motor. The farms that pumped their feed every hour of the day. The baker with *his* motor. The American house with its infernal new bathroom. He briefly thought his way beyond the village, across the Marne, up to Compiègne, Amiens, Calais, London. He had not returned for three decades—perhaps it was almost four—and his bones would not do so on his behalf. He had given instructions. Adeline would obey.

He wondered what Boult was like. "Your young champion," as Adeline always characterized him. Forgetting the intentional irony when he had first bestowed this sobriquet on the conductor. You must expect nothing from those who denigrate you, and less from those who support you. This had always been his motto. He had sent Boult his instructions, too. Whether the fellow would understand the first principles of Kinetic Impressionism remained to be seen. Those damn gentlemen of the Customs House were perhaps listening to the results even now. He had written to Calais explaining the situation. He had telegraphed the recording company asking if a new set could not be dispatched contraband. He had telegraphed Boult, asking him to use his influence so that he might hear his suite before he died. Adeline had not liked his wording of that message; but then Adeline did not like much nowadays.

She had become a vexing woman. When they had first been companions, in Berlin, then in Montparnasse, she had believed in his work, and believed in his principles of life. Later she had become possessive, jealous, critical. As if the abandoning of her own career had made her more expert in his. She had developed a little repertoire of nods and pouts which countermanded her actual words. When he had described the plan and purpose of the "Four English Seasons" to her, she had responded, as she all too regularly did, "I am sure, Leonard, it will be very fine," but her neck was tight as she said it, and she peered at her darning with unnecessary force. Why not say what you think, woman? She was becoming secretive and devious. For instance, he pretty much suspected that she had taken to her knees these last years. *Punaise de sacristie*, he had challenged. She hadn't liked that. She had liked it less when he had guessed another of her little games. "I will see no priest," he had told her. "Or, rather, if I so much as smell one I shall attack him with the fire tongs." She hadn't liked that, oh no. "We are both old people now, Leonard," she had mumbled.

"Agreed. And if I fail to attack him with the fire tongs, consider me senile."

He banged on the boards and the maid, whatever was her name, came up at a trot. "*Numéro six*," he said. She knew not to reply, but nodded, wound the EMG, put on the first movement of the Viola Sonata, and watched the needle's stationary progress until it was time, with swift and practiced wrists, to flip the record over. She was good, this one: just a brief halt at a level crossing, then the music resumed. He was pleased. Tertis knew his business. Yes, he thought, as she lifted the needle, they cannot gainsay that. "*Merci*," he murmured, dismissing the girl.

When Adeline returned, she looked questioningly at Marie-Thérèse, as she always did.

"*Numéro six*," replied the maid.

The first movement of the Viola Sonata. He must have been angry; either that or suddenly fearful over his reputation. She had come to understand the shorthand of his requests, to read his mood from the music he asked to hear. Three months ago he had heard his last Grieg, two months ago his last Chopin. Since then, not even his friends Busoni and Sibelius; just the music of Leonard Verity. The Second Piano Quartet, the Berlin Suite, the Oboe Fantasy (with the revered Goossens), the Pagan Symphony, the Nine French Songs, the Viola Sonata. . . . She knew the articulations of his work as once she had known the articulations of his body. And she admitted that in general he recognized what was finest in his output.

But not the "Four English Seasons." She had thought, from the moment he

FILIP PAGOWSKI

had first talked about it, then blocked it out with his thinned fingers on the piano, that the scheme was misconceived. When he told her it was in four movements, one for each season, beginning with spring and ending with winter, she judged it banal. When he explained that it was not, of course, a mere programmatic representation of the seasons but a kinetic evocation of the memory of those seasons filtered through the known reality of other, non-English seasons, she judged it theoretical. When he chuckled at the notion that each movement would fit perfectly on the two sides of a gramophone record, she judged it calculating. Suspicious of the early sketches, she had liked the work no more in published form; she doubted that hearing it would convert her.

They had always agreed, from the beginning, to value truth above mere social form. But when truths collide, and one of them is dismissed as the squalid personal opinion of an ignorant, foolish Frenchwoman, then perhaps there was something to be said for social form. Heaven knew, she had always admired his music. She had given up her career, her life, for him; but instead of weighing with him this now seemed to count against her. The truth was, she thought—and this was her truth—that some composers had a fine late flowering and others did not. Perhaps the elegy for solo cello would be remembered, though Leonard grew suspicious nowadays at her too frequent praise of it; but not the "Four English Seasons." Leave such things to Elgar, she had said. What she had meant was: you seem to me to be courting the country you deliberately left, indulging a nostalgia of the kind you have always despised; worse, you seem to be inventing a nostalgia you do not truly feel in order to indulge it. Having scorned reputation, you now appear to be seeking it. If only you had said to me, triumphantly, that your work would not fit onto gramophone records.

There were other truths, or squalid personal opinions, that she could not transmit to him. That she herself was not well, and the doctor had talked of surgery. She had replied that she would wait until the current crisis was over. By which she meant, until Leonard is dead, when it will not matter to me whether I submit to a surgical intervention or not. His death had priority over hers. She did not resent this.

She did, however, resent being called a *punaise de sacristie*. She had not been going to Mass, and the idea of confession, after all these decades, struck her as grotesque. But everyone must approach eternity in his own way, and when she sat alone in an empty church she was contemplating extinction, not its palliation by ritual. Leonard would pretend not to see the difference. "Thin end of the wedge," he would say—had said. For her, it was simply that they adopted different stances before the inevitable. Of course he did not like or understand this. He was growing more tyrannical as he reached the end. The weaker his strength, the more he asserted it.

The fire tongs sounded the opening of Beethoven's Fifth on the ceiling above. He must have heard, or guessed, her return. She ran heavily upstairs, banging an elbow on the turn of the bannister. He sat in bed with the tongs aloft. "Brought that priest of yours?" he inquired. But for once he was smiling. She fussed with his blankets and he pretended to object; but as she bent beside him, he laid his hand on her nape, just below her coiled and graying bun, and called her *ma Berlinoise*.

SHE had not anticipated, when they moved to Saint-Maure-de-Vercelles, that they would live quite so separately from the village. Pedantically, he had explained once more. He was an artist, did she not see? He was not an exile, since that implied a country to which he could, or would, return. Nor was he an immigrant, since that implied a desire to be accepted, to submit yourself to the land of adoption. But you did not leave one country, with its social forms and rules and pettinesses, in order to burden yourself with the parallel forms and rules and pettinesses of another country. No, he was an artist. He therefore lived alone with his art, in silence and in freedom. He had not left England, thank you very much, in order to attend a *vin d'honneur* at the mairie, or to tap his thigh at the local *kermesse* and offer a cretinous grin of approval to a squawking bugler.

Adeline learned that she must deal with the village in a swift and necessary fashion. She also found a way to translate Leonard's *profession de foi* into less rebarbative terms. M'sieur was a famous artist, a composer whose work had been played from Helsinki to Barcelona; his concentration must not be disturbed, lest the wonderful melodies forming within him be interrupted and lost forever. M'sieur is like that, his head is in the clouds, it is just that he does not see you, otherwise, of course, he would tip his hat, why, sometimes he does not even notice me when I am standing in front of his face . . .

After they had been living in Saint-Maure for ten or so years, the baker, who played third cornet in the band of the *sapeurs pompiers*, shyly asked her if M'sieur would as a special honor write a dance, preferably a polka, for their twenty-fifth anniversary. Adeline pronounced it unlikely, but agreed to put the request to Leonard. She chose a time when he was not working on a composition, and seemed to be of sunny temperament. Later, she regretted that she had not chosen a moment of foul temper. For, yes, he said, with a curious smile, he would be delighted to write a polka for the band; he, whose work was performed from Helsinki to Barcelona, was not so proud that he would not do such a thing. Two days later, he gave her a sealed manila envelope. The baker was delighted and asked her to convey his particular thanks and respects to M'sieur. A week later, when she entered the *boulangerie*, he would not look at her or speak to her. Finally, he asked why M'sieur had chosen to laugh in their faces. He had scored the piece for three hundred players when they had only twelve. He had called it a polka but it did not have the rhythm of a polka; rather, that of a funeral march. Nor could Pierre-Marc or Jean-Simon, both of whom had made some musical studies, discern the slightest melody in the piece. The baker was regretful, yet also angry and humiliated. Perhaps, Adeline suggested, she had taken the wrong composition by mistake. She was handed the manila envelope and asked what the English word "poxy" meant. She said she was not sure. She pulled out the score. It was headed "Poxy Polka for Poxy Pompiers." She said she thought the word meant "bright," "vivid," "shining like the brass on your uniforms." Well then, Madame, it was a pity that the piece did not appear bright and vivid enough to those who would not now play it.

MORE years passed, the baker handed over to his son, and it was the turn of the English artist, the irregular M'sieur who did not even tip his hat to the curé when he met him, to ask a favor. Saint-Maure-de-Vercelles was just within range of the British Broadcasting

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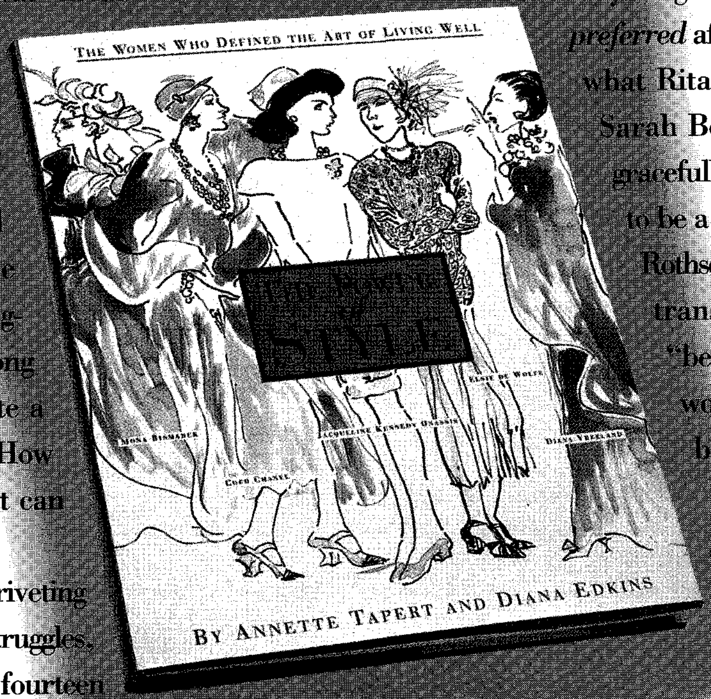
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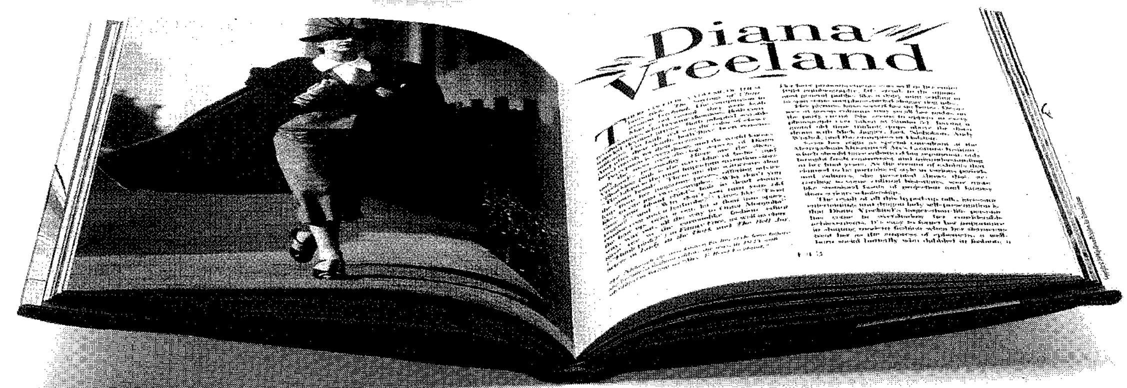
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Corporation. The English artist had a high-powered wireless that enabled him to pick up music from London. Reception, alas, was of greatly varying quality. Sometimes the atmosphere caused problems, there were storms and bad weather, against which nothing could be done. The hills beyond the Marne were not of great assistance, either. However, M'sieur had discovered, by deduction, one day when every single house in the village had fallen silent for a wedding, that there were also local forms of disturbance, from electric motors of all kinds. The butcher had such a machine, two of the farmers pumped their feed by this method, and of course the baker with his bread . . . Could they be prevailed upon, just for an afternoon, as an experiment, of course . . . Whereupon the English artist heard the opening bars of Sibelius's Fourth Symphony, that grave grumble from the lower strings and bassoons, which was normally below the threshold of audibility, with a sudden and refreshed clarity. And so the experiment was to be repeated from time to time, by permission. Adeline was the go-between on such occasions, a little apologetic, but also playing on the snobbery of the notion that Saint-Maure-de-Vercelles had living in its midst a great artist, one whose greatness embellished the village, and whose glory would shine the brighter if only the farmers would pump their feed by hand, the *boulanger* would confect his bread without electricity, and the butcher lady would turn off her motor as well. One afternoon Leonard discovered a new source of disturbance, which took powers of detection to locate and then delicacy of negotiation to disarm. The American ladies who were fair-weather occupants of that converted mill house beyond the *lavoir* had naturally installed all manner of appliances, which in Leonard's view were quite superfluous to life. One of these in particular affected reception on M'sieur's high-powered wireless. The English artist did not even have a telephone; but the two American ladies had had the decadence, and the impertinence, to install a water closet operated by electricity! It took a certain tact, a quality Adeline had developed increasingly over the years, to persuade them, on certain occasions, to delay their flushing.

It was difficult to explain to Leonard that he could not require the village to fold its shutters every time he wanted to listen to a concert. Besides, there were occasions when the American ladies simply forgot, or appeared to forget, the Englishman's demand; while if Adeline entered the *boulangerie* and found that the baker's old father, still third cornettist for the *sapeurs pompiers*, was in charge, she knew there was little point in even asking. Leonard tended to become irate when she failed, and his normal pallor was blasted with puce. It would have been easier had he felt able to offer a word of direct thanks himself, perhaps even a small present; but no, he acted as if countrywide silence were his prerogative. When he first became seriously ill, and the wireless was transported to his bedroom, he wished to hear more and more concerts, which strained the sympathy of the village. Happily, over the last few months he had wanted nothing but his own music. Adeline might still be dispatched to obtain a vow of muteness from the village, but she would only pretend to go, confident that by the time the concert was due to begin Leonard would have decided not to bother with the wireless that evening. Instead, he would prefer her to wind up the EMG, shuffle the horn, and play him the Oboe Fantasy, the French Songs, or the slow movement of the Pagan Symphony.

THOSE had been brave days, in Berlin, Leipzig, Helsinki, Paris. England was death to the true artist. To be a success there you had to be a second Mendelssohn: that was what they were waiting for, like a second Messiah. In England they had fog between the ears. They imagined themselves talking about art but they were only talking about taste. They had no concept of freedom, of the artist's needs. It was all Jesus and marriage in London Town. Sir Edward Elgar, knight, Order of Merit, Master of the King's Musick, baronet, husband. "Falstaff" was a worthy piece, there was fine stuff in the "Introduction and Allegro," but he had wasted his time with Jesus, with those infernal oratorios. Parry! Had he lived long enough, he would have set to music the entire Bible.

It was not permitted to be an artist in England. You might be a painter, or a composer, or a scribbler of some kind, but those foggy brains did not understand the essential precondition behind all these subsequent professions: that of *being an artist*. In Continental Europe they did

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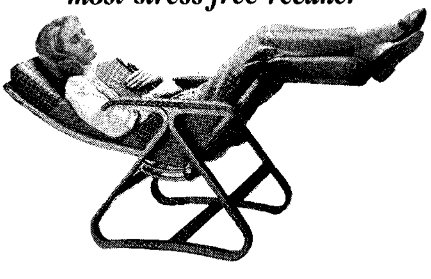

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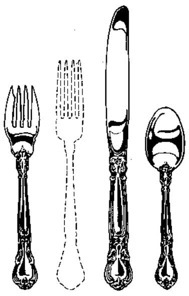

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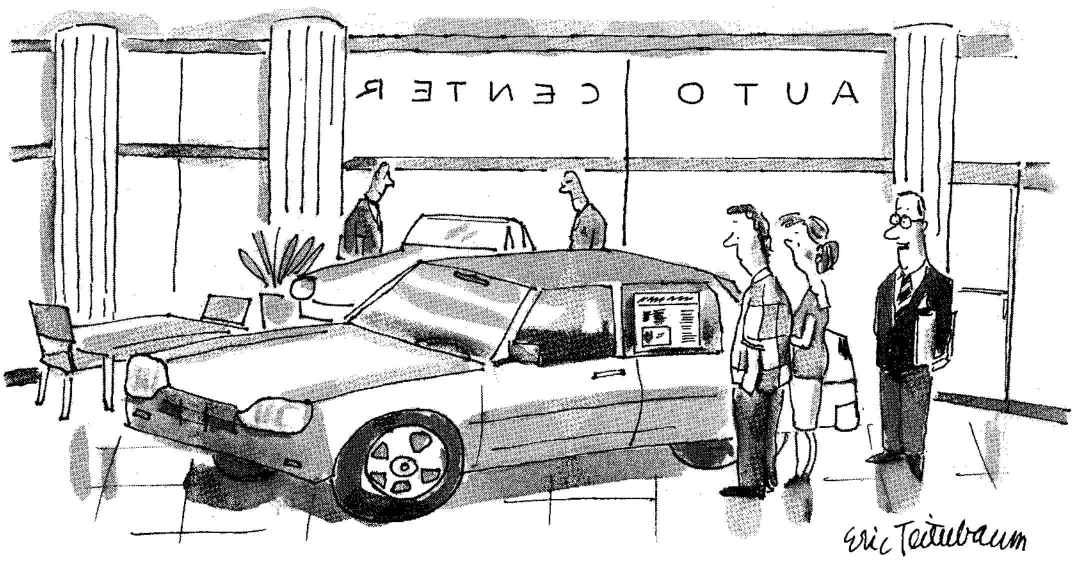

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not laugh at such an idea. He had had fine times, brave days. With Busoni, with Sibelius. His walking tour in the Tyrol, when he had read his beloved Nietzsche in the German. Christianity preaches death. Sin is the invention of the Jews. Chastity produces as much foulness of soul as lust. Man is the cruellest animal. To pity is to be weak.

In England, the soul lived on its knees, shuffling toward the nonexistent God like some butcher boy. Religion had poisoned art. "Gerontius" was nauseating. Palestrina was mathematics. Plainsong was ditchwater. You had to leave England to find the upper slopes, to let the soul soar. That comfortable island dragged you down into softness and pettiness, into Jesus and marriage. Music is an emanation, an exaltation of the spirit, and how can music flow when the spirit is pegged and tethered? He had explained all this to Adeline when first he had met her. She had understood. Had she been an Englishwoman, she would have expected him to play the organ on Sunday and help her bottle jam. But Adeline had been an artist herself at the time. The voice had been coarse but still expressive. And she had seen that if he was to pursue his destiny, her art would have to be subordinate to his. You could not soar if manacled. She had understood that, too, at the time.

It was insistently important to him that she admire the "Four English Seasons." She was becoming ever more conventional and foggy between the ears: such was the penalty of age. She had at last spotted before her the great immensity of the void and did not know how to respond. He knew. Either you lashed yourself to the mast or you were carried away. He therefore kept ever more sternly and deliberately to the rigorous principles of life and art which he had spent so long enunciating. If you weakened, you were lost, and the house would soon enough contain the priest, the telephone, and the collected works of Palestrina.

When the telegram from Boult arrived, he ordered Marie-Thérèse not to mention the fact to Madame, on pain of dismissal. Then he placed an additional pencil cross against Tuesday's concert in *Radio Times*. "We shall listen to this," he informed Adeline. "Alert the village." As she looked over his fingers at the paper, he could sense her puzzlement. A Glinka overture, followed by Schumann and Tchaikovsky: hardly the preferred listening of Leonard Verity. Not even Grieg, still less Busoni or Sibelius. "We shall discover what my young champion does with this old stuff," he said by way of explanation. "Alert the village, do you see?" "Yes, Leonard," she replied.

He knew it was one of his masterpieces; he knew that were she to hear it truly, she would recognize this. But it must come upon her suddenly. That opening enchantment of the remembered bucolic, with a pianissimo *cor anglais* wrapped in the quietest rustle of muted violas. He imagined the soft transformation of her face, her eyes turning toward him as they had done in Berlin and Montparnasse . . . He loved her enough to see it as his task to rescue her from her own later self. But there must be truth between them, too.

As she straightened his blanket he therefore said, abruptly, "This business won't be cured by *le coup du chapeau*, you know."

She scurried from the room in tears. He could not judge whether they were caused by his acknowledgment of death or by his reference to their first few weeks together. Perhaps both. In Berlin, where they had met, he had failed to arrive for their second rendezvous, but instead of taking offense, as other women might have done, Adeline had come to his room and found him prostrate with an influenza cold. He remembered her straw hat, worn despite the lateness of the season, her full, clear eyes, the cool chord of her fingers, and the curve of her hip as she turned away.

"We shall cure you with *le coup du chapeau*," she had announced. It was apparently some medical practice or, more likely, superstition among the peasants of her region. She declined to elucidate, but went away and returned with a wrapped bottle. She told him to make himself comfortable and to put his feet together. When they formed a soft *puy* in the bed, she found his hat and placed it over his feet. Then she poured him a large tumblerful of cognac and told him to drink. At the time, he had preferred beer to strong liquor, but he did as he was told, marvelling at how improbable such a scene would be in England.

After two deep glasses, she asked if he could still see his hat. He replied that of course he could. "Keep watching it," she had said, and poured him a third glass. He was forbidden to speak, and had no memory now of what she had chattered on about. He merely drank and watched his hat. Finally, midway through his fifth glass, he had started to giggle and announced, "I can see two hats."

"Good," she said with sudden briskness. "Then the cure is working." She had played the same spread chord on his forehead and left, taking the bottle with her. He fell into a coma and awoke twenty hours later, feeling much better. Not the least reason for this was that when he opened his eyes and looked down toward his feet there was no hat to be seen but only the profile of his already beloved Adeline, sitting in a low chair reading a book. It was then that he told her he was going to become a great composer. Opus 1, scored for string quartet, flute, mezzo-soprano, and sousaphone, would be called "Le Coup du Chapeau." Using his newly discovered method of Kinetic Impressionism, it would depict the travails of a suffering artist cured of influenza and lovesickness by a beautiful helpmeet and a bottle of cognac. Would she accept the dedication, he had asked. Only if she admired the piece, she had replied with a flirtatious tilt of her face.

"If I write it, you will admire it." The statement was not vain or authoritarian but, rather, the reverse. Our destinies, he meant, are now joined, and I shall consider worthless any composition of mine that fails to please you. This is what his words intended, and she had understood.

Now, downstairs in the kitchen, stripping the fat from some beef bones to make Leonard's bouillon, she remembered those first few months in Berlin. How jolly he had been, with his cane, his sly wink, and his repertoire of music-hall songs; how not at all the stiff Englishman of racial stereotype. And what a different patient he had made in those days when she had given him *le coup du chapeau.* That had been the start of their love; now she was tending him once more, at the end of it. In Berlin, when he was recovered, he had promised that she would be a great singer and he would be a great composer; he would write his music for her voice and together they would conquer Europe.

It had not happened. She had doubted her own talent more than she doubted his. They made instead an artists' pact. They bound themselves together, twin spirits in life and in music, though never in marriage. They would fly free of the constraints that governed most people's existences, preferring the higher constraints of art. They would rest lightly on the ground so that they might soar the higher. They would not entangle themselves in the pettinesses of life. There would be no children.

And so they had lived: in Berlin, Leipzig, Helsinki, Paris, and now in a softly scooped valley north of Coulommiers. They had rested lightly on the ground here for over two decades. Leonard's fame had grown, and with it his reclusive-

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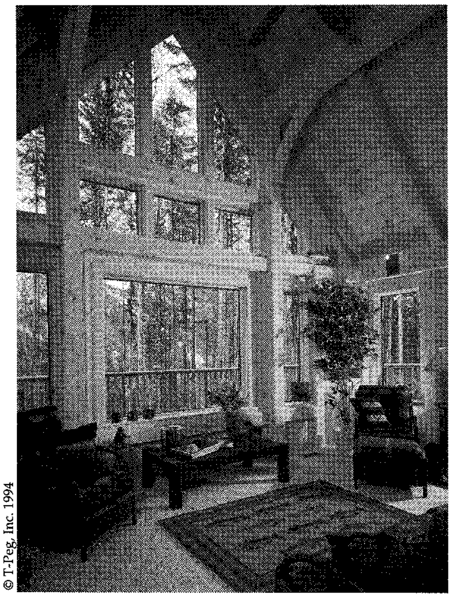

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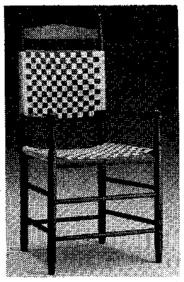

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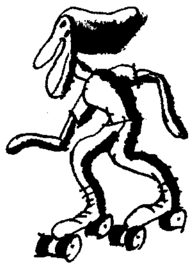
ness. There was no telephone in the house; newspapers were forbidden; the high-powered wireless was used only for listening to concerts. Journalists and acolytes were denied entry; most letters went unanswered. Once a year, until Leonard became ill, they would travel south, to Menton, Antibes, Toulon, incongruous locations where Leonard would fret for his damp valley and the lonely rigor of his normal life. On these journeys Adeline would sometimes fall prey to a sharper lamentation, for the family she had quarrelled with all those years ago. In a café her glance might stop on the face of some lyrical young man, and she would briefly consider him an unknown nephew. Leonard dismissed these speculations as sentimental.



For Adeline the artistic life had begun in gregariousness and warmth; now it was ending in solitude and austerity. When she had nervously suggested to Leonard that they might secretly be married she had implied two things only. First, that she would be better able to protect his music and watch over his copyrights; and, second, selfishly, that she would be able to live on in the house they had shared for so long.

She explained to Leonard the inflexibility of the French law in respect of concubinage, but he did not want to hear. He had become irate, banging the fire tongs on the boards, so that Marie-Thérèse came running. How could she think of betraying the very principles of their life together? His music belonged to nobody and to the whole planet. Either it would be played after his death or it would not, depending on the intelligence or stupidity of the world; that was all there was to be said. As for herself, he had not realized when they had made their pact that she had sought pecuniary advantage, and if that was what exercised her, she should take what money she could find in the house when he lay on his deathbed. She might as well return to her family and pamper those imaginary nephews she was always bleating about. Here, take the Gauguin off the wall and sell it now if that is your concern. But do stop your wailing.

“IT is time,” Leonard Verity said.

“Yes.”

“We shall see what my ‘young champion’ is made of.”

“Oh, Leonard, let us have the Oboe Fantasy again.”

“Just turn it on, woman. We are nearly at the hour.”

As the wireless slowly warmed and hummed, and the rain played a soft pizzicato on the window, she told herself it did not really matter that she had failed to alert the village. She doubted he would persist beyond the overture to “Ruslan and Ludmilla,” which in any case had sufficient stridency to pierce most atmospheric disturbance.

“Queen’s Hall . . . Invitation Concert . . . Musical Director of the British Broadcasting Corporation . . .” They listened to the normal litany from their normal positions: he aloft in the bed, she in the low basketwork chair, close to the EMG in case the tuning needed adjustment. “Change to the program which has been previously announced . . . Glinka . . . new work by the English composer Leonard Verity . . . honor of his seventieth birthday later this year . . . ‘Four English . . .’ ”

She howled. He had never heard such a sound emerge from her before. She fought her heavy way downstairs, ignored Marie-Thérèse, and ran out into a wet dark afternoon. Below her, the village jangled with light and flashed with noise: gigantic motors turned and thrummed. A *kermesse* had started in her head with traction engines and floodlamps, the comic frippery of the roundabout organ, the tinny clatter of the shooting range, the careless blast of cornet and bugle, laughter, fake fear, flashing bulbs, and stupid songs. She ran down the track to the first of these orgiastic sites. The old *boulanger* turned inquisitively as the wild, wet, underdressed woman irrupted into his son’s shop, gave him a mad stare, howled, and ran out again. She, who for years had been so practical, so swift and necessary with the village, now could not even make herself understood. She wanted to strike the whole countryside into silence with fire from the gods. She ran into the butcher’s, where Madame was driving her mighty turbine: a throbbing belt, a tormenting scream, blood everywhere. She ran to the nearest farm and saw feed for a hundred thousand cattle being churned and sluiced by a hundred electric pumps. She ran to the American house, but her knocking could not be heard above the antic flushing of a dozen electric water closets. The village was conspiring, just as the world always conspired against the artist, waiting until he was weakest and then seeking to destroy him. The world did it carelessly, without knowing why, without seeing why, just thumbing a switch with a casual clack. And the world didn’t even notice, didn’t listen, just as now they seemed not to hear the words in her mouth, these faces gathered round, staring at her. He was right, of course he was right, he had always been right. And she had betrayed him in the end, he was right about that, too.

In the kitchen Marie-Thérèse was standing in awkward conspiracy with the curé. Adeline went upstairs to the bedroom and shut the door. He was dead, of course, she knew that. His eyes were closed, either by nature or by human interference. His hair looked as if it had just been combed, and his mouth was turned down in a final sulk. She eased the fire tongs from his hand, touched his forehead in a spread chord, then lay down on the bed beside him. His body yielded no more in death than it had in life. At last, she fell quiet, and as her senses returned she became loosely aware of Schumann’s piano concerto stumbling through the static.

SHE sent to Paris for a *mouleur*, who took a cast of the composer’s face, and one of his right hand. The British Broadcasting Corporation announced the death of Leonard Verity, but since they had so recently given the first performance of his final work, further musical tribute was judged inessential.

Three weeks after the funeral, a square parcel marked “Fragile” arrived at the house. Adeline was alone. She chipped the sealing wax from the two fat knots, unfolded layers of corrugated cardboard, and found an obsequious letter from the recording manager. She took each of the “Four English Seasons” from its stiff manila envelope and sat them on her knee. Idly, methodically, as Leonard would have approved, she ordered them. Spring, summer, autumn, winter. She stared at the edge of the kitchen table, hearing other melodies.

They broke like biscuit. Her thumb bled. ♦

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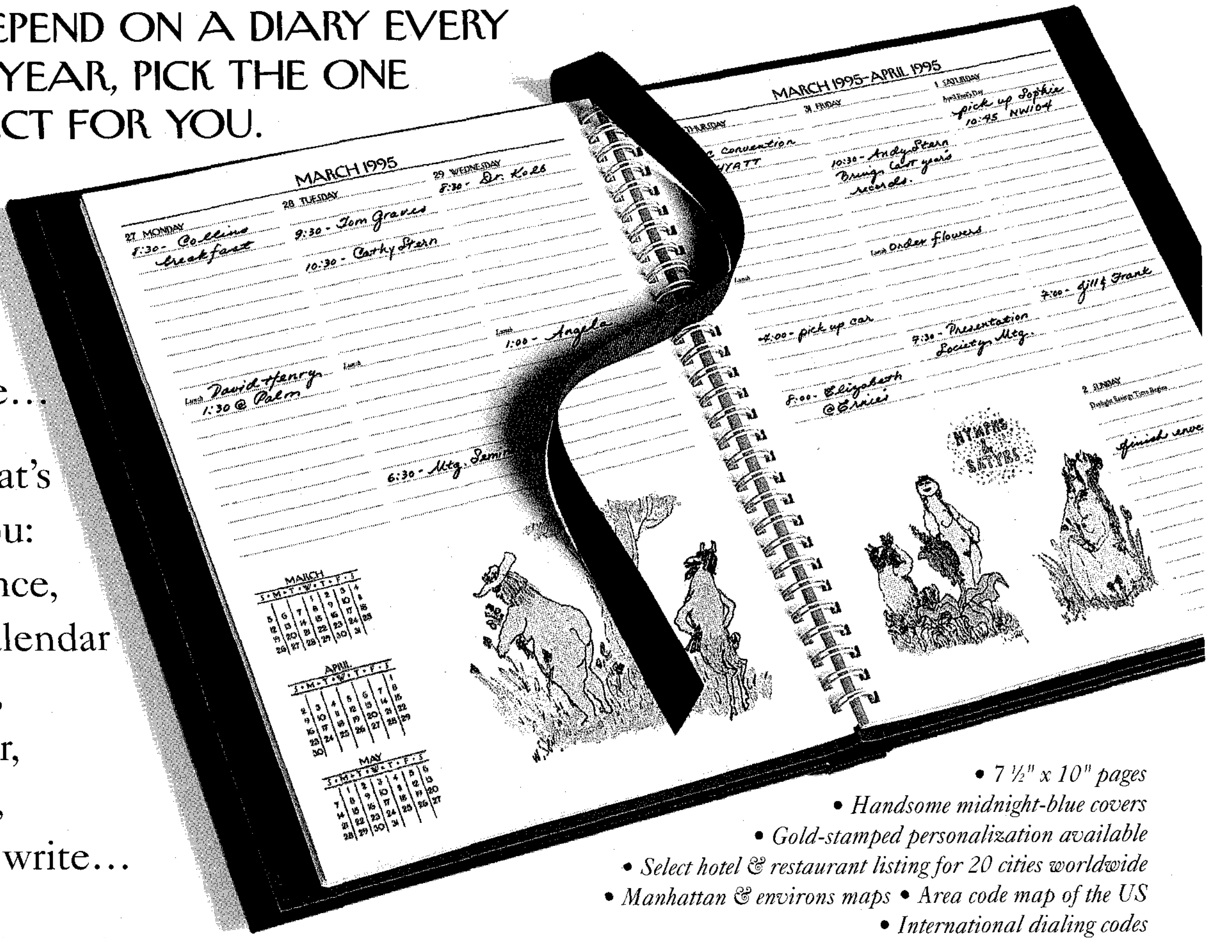

MARCH 1995
27 MONDAY
8:30 - Collins breakfast
28 TUESDAY
9:30 - Tom Graves
10:30 - Cathy Stern
29 WEDNESDAY
8:30 - Dr. Kole
Lunch David Henry 1:30 @ Palm
1:00 - Angela
6:30 - Mtg. Semi
MARCH 1995–APRIL 1995
30 THURSDAY
31 FRIDAY
1 SATURDAY
Convention HYATT
10:30 - Andy Stern Bring last year's records.
pick up Sophie 10:45 NW104
Order flowers
4:00 - pick up car
7:30 - Presentation Society Mtg.
7:00 - Jill & Frank
8:00 - Elizabeth @ Elaine's
2 SUNDAY
finish envelopes
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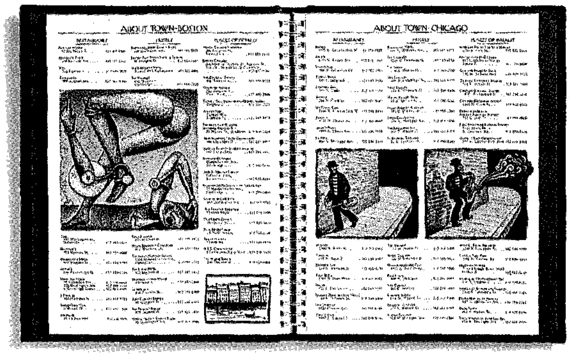

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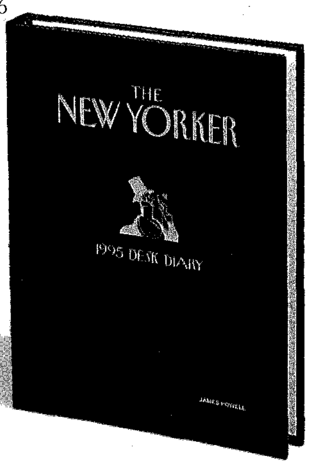

THE NEW YORKER
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JAMES POWELL

THE CRITICS

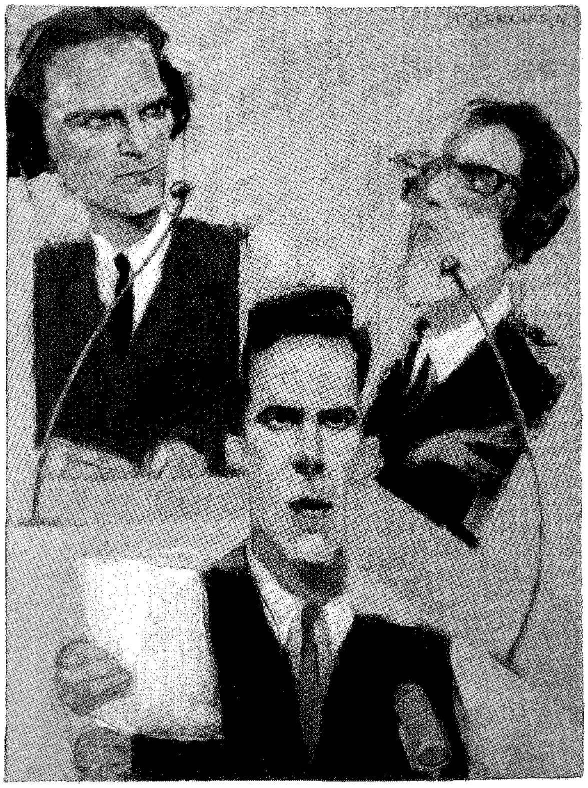
THE CURRENT CINEMA

QUIZLINGS

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

Robert Redford's "Quiz Show" is a speedy, absorbing chronicle of a trivial show-business scandal of the fifties: the rigging of big-money television quiz shows, which purported to be genuine tests of knowledge but were in fact carefully constructed dramas of intellectual combat, with predetermined outcomes. Before the con was exposed, shows like "The $64,000 Question" and "Twenty-One" were among the highest-rated programs on prime-time television, and, as it turned out, their immense popularity was the result of the producers' shrewd deployment of rather simple narrative strategies. The shows' manipulative techniques varied. "The $64,000 Question," in which a contestant was quizzed on his or her knowledge in a single area of specialization, tried to pique the audience's interest with cutely paradoxical matches of contestants and categories: a prim, tiny woman with a doctorate in psychology (Dr. Joyce Brothers, actually) was presented as an expert on boxing; a rugged Marine captain answered question after question on the fine points of haute cuisine. When someone selected for that show seemed to appeal to the audience, the producers would contrive to keep this contestant winning, but they didn't, as a rule, simply give the star player the right answers: drawing on hours of testing and interviewing, the staff designed questions that the desired winners would almost certainly be able to answer; the designated losers, of course, were given questions that they'd be pretty sure to miss.

It makes sense that, with large profits for the sponsors and the networks at stake, the quiz-show producers would leave as little as possible to chance. Their purpose, as they saw it, was to give the viewing (and buying) public a shapely, suspenseful story about "real" people. Honest competition wouldn't work at all; if the endings came out wrong, the folks out there in TV land might be disappointed, might even lose the optimism that makes for good consumers. Sellers like to keep us potential buyers cheerful, confident that everything will always turn out just the way we expect it to; no one wants to pitch his product to a nation of Cubs fans.



Passing the secret word: Ralph Fiennes, Christopher McDonald, and John Turturro in "Quiz Show."

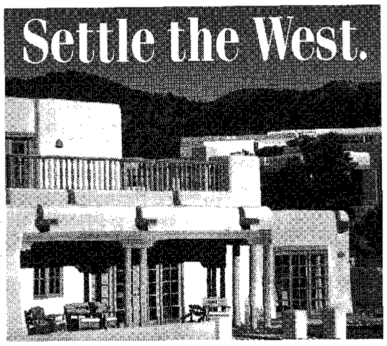
N. ASCENCIOS

"Quiz Show" focusses on the NBC program "Twenty-One," whose production techniques eliminated even the infinitesimal margin for error that "The $64,000 Question" allowed. "Twenty-One" was a general-knowledge quiz, which meant that the likelihood of any contestant's answering a particular question correctly was more difficult to predict. So the producers just scripted the whole thing, from week to week, giving the players questions and sometimes answers to memorize and then coaching them on how to mime the agonies of information recall: the contestants were shown the proper way to stammer, to bite their lips, and to mop their foreheads. The bogusness of "Twenty-One" was pure, systematic, and absolute, and it paid off: at the height of the show's popularity, it was one of TV's top-rated programs, and it generated huge sales increases for its sponsor, Geritol. Since there was, theoretically, no limit to the amount of money a contestant could win, and since the game was constructed so that matches frequently ended in ties, "Twenty-One" could keep a well-liked champion on the air for months. Charles Van Doren (played here by the British actor Ralph Fiennes), a tall, personable young instructor at Columbia, reigned for ten weeks, and became so famous that he made the cover of *Time* and was signed up as a regular—the house egghead—on the “Today” show. But Van Doren’s ascent was, in a way, the program’s downfall. The champion whom Van Doren replaced was an intense, paranoid underachiever from Queens named Herbert Stempel (John Turturro), who was bitter at having to cede the spotlight to this polished and obviously privileged challenger. After several months of stewing, Stempel blew the whistle.

The script, by Paul Attanasio, uses Stempel and Van Doren as opposing social principles, and the game show itself as an ironic metaphor. The intellectual combat on “Twenty-One” is illusory, but there is, the movie suggests, a real battle going on between Stempel and Van Doren—at least in the deposed champion’s mind. Stempel isn’t shocked to discover that the show is just a glorified personality contest; he knows that the producers have engineered his own long run because they believe that his “Everyman quality” appeals to viewers. What enrages him is how *easily* the show casts him off. The instant Van Doren appears, Stempel is history, as if it were self-evident that an aristocratic-seeming Ivy League Gentile is a more attractive hero for the masses than an earnest Jewish striver from City College. Charles Van Doren is a sort of academic prince—he’s the son of the distinguished poet and scholar Mark Van Doren (played by Paul Scofield)—who is coming into his kingdom. The irony is that it isn’t his father’s kingdom, the serene paradise of the university, but a different realm entirely: the undeveloped territory of the mass media, in which he can play the role of the bearer of truth and beauty to the barbarians. As far as Stempel is concerned, Charlie is just another unworthy member of an élite that has cheated him out of the success he deserves. (The fact that his own celebrity is based on deceit doesn’t trouble him much; he clearly believes that although he has been given the answers, the money and the fame are fitting rewards for his long and heretofore unprofitable intellectual labors.)

At times, “Quiz Show” harps so relentlessly on the idea of the scrappy Jewish underdog versus the pedigreed Gentile overdog that it seems nearly as single-minded as Stempel himself. Turturro, with his customary lack of restraint, gapes and sweats and splutters, and what foams out of him is ethnic-flavored invective—“that big uncircumcised putz” is one of his colorful epithets for Charlie—and conspiracy theories about the victimization of Jews: on “Twenty-One,” he says, “they always follow a Jew with a Gentile, and the Gentile wins more money.” (This sounds nutty when he says it, but we later find out that he’s right.) The performance could hardly be more feverish; the lunatic vitality of the character’s resentment overwhelms every other quality—even the Everyman quality—that he might possess, and makes him monotonous. In the second half of “Quiz Show,” the movie’s interest shifts away from Stempel and toward Charles Van Doren, and the Gentile wins more complexity. Or a better illusion of complexity, anyway. Fiennes’ performance is as much a caricature as Turturro’s, but the qualities being caricatured are less showy, so Fiennes seems subtler, deeper. He’s just quieter. The character’s diffidence, nonchalance, and boyish charm appear designed to make Charlie signify “vapid Gentile” in the same way that Stempel’s abrasiveness denotes “aggressive Jew.” As written, the role of Charlie is a stereotype: he’s a soulless, white-bread sort of guy, whose easy manner belies a fierce ambivalence about a powerful father. Fiennes adds a touch of mystery to this stock figure, but it’s not the result of anything deliberate: his Charlie strikes us as enigmatic because nothing about him—not his speech or his gestures or his expressions—seems at all American. It’s mid-Atlantic acting.

Although most of the evidence against the perpetrators of the quiz-show scam was in fact uncovered by the Manhattan District Attorney’s office, the movie gives all the glory to Richard N. Goodwin (Rob Morrow), a young hot shot on the legal staff of a congressional subcommittee. (Goodwin’s 1988 memoir, “Remembering America: A Voice from the Sixties,” is the only source material cited in the movie’s credits.) Reducing a complicated information-gathering process, with a large cast of investigators, to the exploits of a lone truth seeker makes good dramatic sense. And there’s a practical reason for assigning the hero’s role to Goodwin rather than to, say, Joseph Stone, who directed the investigation by the D.A.’s office. Stone had built the case (his efforts are recounted in his own book, “Prime Time and Misdemeanors”), but the report of the grand jury he conducted was sealed. It took Goodwin to give the



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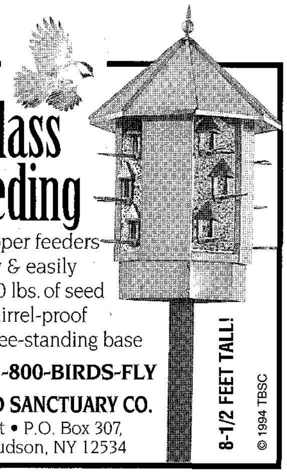

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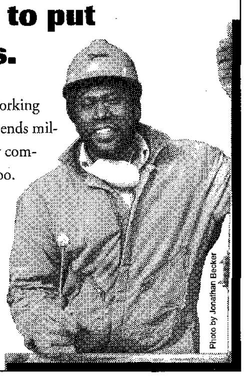

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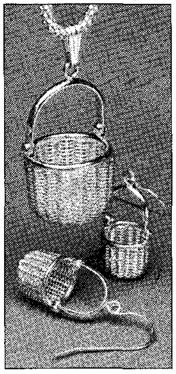

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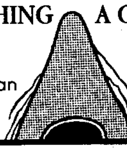

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story its true climax: his work brought about the congressional hearings that finally exposed the quiz shows' fraudulence, and forced Charles Van Doren to reveal himself publicly as a sham.

A less good reason for making Goodwin the hero of "Quiz Show" is that, since he's both a Jew and a Harvard graduate, he's ideally suited to represent the script's schematically defined conflict between Stempel's world and Van Doren's. The movie takes pains to show us how much more comfortable Goodwin is with Charlie than he is with Stempel, and to suggest that the ambitious young lawyer is being seduced, as Charlie's dazzled TV audience was, by a projected image of his own status-greedy fantasies, of his desire to enter the ranks of the élite. We're supposed to feel that the hero is somehow torn between his aspirations and his roots, and, in case we don't get the point, Goodwin's wife (Mira Sorvino) spells it out for us: she accuses him of being "the betrayer of the Jews." That's a little harsh. And when the movie is over, it might occur to you that a man in Goodwin's position is unlikely to have felt the sort of emotional conflict that the script attributes to him. In terms of his own ambitions, the dilemma of choosing between Stempel and Charlie seems like an easy call. It isn't in Goodwin's interest to protect his fellow Ivy Leaguer, or even to believe him: the scandal is the lawyer's ticket to the big time. So what's to agonize about? He has to know, right from the start, that he's guaranteed to be a winner in this game; by helping Stempel prove, and publicize, his allegations, Goodwin gets to have his roots and pull them up, too.

Even though "Quiz Show" doesn't quite succeed in selling its big ideas about the class dynamics of American society, it's an awfully entertaining picture, because it's such a witty, vigorous evocation of the media world of the fifties. The movie draws energy from the sheer silliness of the quiz-show circus, from the giddy, almost hysterical atmosphere that envelops everything associated with "Twenty-One"—not just the production of the show but also Goodwin's investigation of it. ("We're going to put television on trial," he announces, his rhetoric displaying a hyperbolic tendency that's worthy of television itself.) The whole movie seems to be taking place in a realm of vivid absurdity, where matters of no real consequence are somehow inflated to vast, heroic proportions. Everyone acts as if he were doing something terribly important, but no one actually is. For all the sweating and the lip-biting that go on, both in front of the TV cameras and in the corporate offices, the participants in the quiz-show scam don't even have the stature of real criminals; they're sleazy, but they're not breaking any laws. Redford's brisk, alert direction captures the slapstick unreality of this odd footnote to American cultural history: "Quiz Show" hums along like a well-constructed farce, and its crazy momentum carries us over the bumps of social significance.

And the supporting cast is wonderful. Allan Rich, as the president of NBC, radiates fat-cat arrogance; Christopher McDonald's portrayal of Jack Barry, the host of "Twenty-One," is a hilarious cartoon of unearned self-regard; Barry Levinson does a dead-on parody of Dave Garroway, the "Today" show's blandly genial star; Hank Azaria, as a "Twenty-One" producer, creates a memorable comic portrait of an antsy, vulgar yes-man; and Scofield, despite having to bear an inordinate share of the picture's moral weight, is a terrifically convincing Mark Van Doren. Best of all is David Paymer, who plays Dan Enright, the co-creator (with Barry) of "Twenty-One" and the chief architect of the fraud. By the end of the movie, Enright—a quiet, bespectacled man with a soothing manner—seems to embody the qualities that made the cheesy scandal possible: both the cloaked greed and the pathetic good-soldier willingness to give the network, the sponsors, and the audience what they want. Paymer's Enright is alarming and sad; it's a superbly shaded performance. When Enright appears before Congress to take the fall for the higher-ups, he looks lonely and anxious, like a contestant in an isolation booth, and he does what's expected of him, just as Stempel and Van Doren did on "Twenty-One." He looks as if he had suddenly realized that he has no self, no reality at all. At the end of "Quiz Show," all the characters appear to have been drained of something, hollowed out, and we understand that we've been watching a very unusual kind of comedy—a farce about emptiness, played by ghosts. ♦

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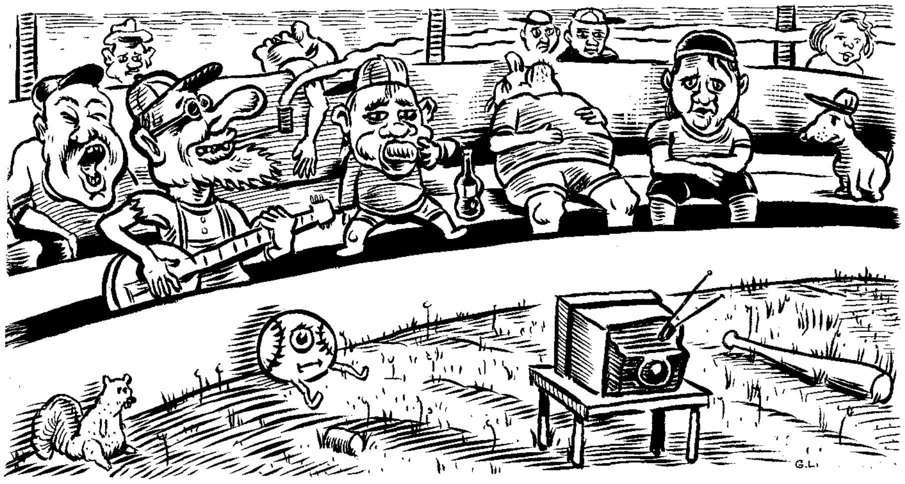
BY JAMES WOLCOTT



GARY LEIB

BASEBALL is a slow game, but not as slow as Ken Burns's "Baseball," which is paced like a religious procession—or a ghost march. Like "The Civil War," Burns's previous documentary series for PBS, "Baseball" (which begins September 18th) is a feat of archival reconstruction, interwoven narrative, and anecdotal lore. Thousands of still photographs were filmed for the series, hundreds of quotations were chosen to be read over the stills by such golden tonsils as Paul Newman, Jason Robards, Gregory Peck, and John Chancellor, and two hundred and fifty versions of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" were recorded for possible use in the soundtrack. The home-video version of "Baseball," which runs more than eighteen hours, consists of nine cassettes—one for each inning of an epic ballgame.

Historically, it's all here, in neat chronological order, from Ty Cobb's raised spikes to Joe DiMaggio's unruffled canter; from Lou Gehrig's stoic endurance to Casey Stengel's almost Dadaist doubletalk. The marketing of the show ups the ante on the commercial success of "The Civil War," which, according to *Forbes*, sold sixty million dollars' worth of videotapes and coffee-table books. "Baseball" is being given an even more lavish multimedia launch, with spinoffs ranging from uniform jerseys to coffee mugs. The praise seems prepackaged, too. The press kit features puffery that would have made D. W. Griffith blush. Where "The Civil War" was compared to a Greek epic ("Our Iliad has found its Homer," George Will wrote), "Baseball" has been likened to the construction of the Great Pyramid. It encodes everything we are. "If I were to choose a single creative work to beam up to the civilization of a distant planet to describe America—at its best and at its worst—that work would be 'Baseball,' " one baseball expert blurbs. The greatest shrine to baseball since Cooperstown, "Baseball" is a museum installation for the airwaves, an electronic scrapbook in which every item has been evenly pasted. There's no denying its magnitude. It's a mighty assemblage.

With this summer's baseball strike casting a pall over the sport, it's understandable that fans might wish to travel back to a simpler past, when players seemed cut from plain cloth, and America itself was still rawboned, gawky, just off the boat or fresh from the farm. The early portions of "Baseball" offer a return to green pastures and paradise gained. Garrison Keillor reads Walt Whitman's words on the soundtrack just before we're shown vintage photographs of Civil War soldiers playing ball around their tents and early professional teams posed for group shots in stiff formations. Sepia prints seem to preserve these biceps'd specimens in amber. The country is still

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spread out, unfilled in. As the nation becomes urbanized and baseball becomes a city game, the streets and stadiums begin to look like ant colonies. There is amazing footage of hundreds of men crowded on concrete islands in the city to follow a World Series game on a giant scoreboard, complete with a simulated diamond, while traffic streams around them. And hats! As Babe Ruth rounds third after a home run, straw hats are tossed onto the field like Frisbees. Burns doesn't sugarcoat the sport's picturesque beginnings. "Baseball" demonstrates that rifts between owners and players are as old as baseball itself, and that racism tainted the sport from the outset. But while the spoken words recount injustices, the music, maddening in its careful quaintness, pines with nostalgia. Burns can't pry himself loose from the elegiac mode he ritualized in "The Civil War." As "Baseball" inches forward, it's hard to say which becomes more grating—the banjo picking, fit for Ma and Pa Kettle, or the piano tinkling, which sounds like silent-movie accompaniment. Either way, it's like being stuck in a stuffy parlor forever.

A hush also seems to hang over the nearly all-male chorus of talking heads, among them George Will, George Plimpton, Studs Terkel, Willie Morris, Mario Cuomo, Gerald Early, Billy Crystal, Bob Costas, Roger Angell, and Stephen Jay Gould, who offer their perspectives and recollections in rapt closeups, like the witnesses in "Reds." Some of what is said is apt and specific, as when Angell describes Sandy Koufax's bow-and-arrow pitching style and the odd delicacy of Babe Ruth's ankles. But most of it is standard homilies: how baseball is the only game in which the defense has the ball; how it partakes of immortality because it's the only game without a clock. It is a game played on a grassy preserve, recalling the Garden of Eden, a game in which the object is to return safely home, recalling the odysseys of myth. The series begins to sound like an infomercial—all these celebrity endorsements of baseball's geometrical design and democratic spirit. Bob Costas glows with evangelical pride as he provides the following gloss on a probably apocryphal story about an Englishman insulting Babe Ruth: "You give me Babe Ruth over any king who's ever sat on the throne, and I'll be happy with that trade."

If baseball is such a beautiful game, beloved by millions, treasured in the collective memory bank (we're told time and again that baseball fans are the most historically knowledgable of all sports lovers), why does it need this sales pitch? Until this summer's strike, attendance was up. Baseball books abound; David Halberstam's "October 1964" is the latest on the best-seller list. There's no trailoff of interest in the sport. It's in no need of nurturing. "Baseball" isn't only preaching to the converted; it's preaching to itself. I think this overcompensation reflects a deeper unease. The intellectuality masks a sentimental funk. What's striking about the testimonials of Burns's highbrow analysts is how homogeneous their tone is, how earnest and reflective. It's as if they had become part of the fraternal order of "Field of Dreams." The entire series sags beneath this mopey air of male menopause. Once, these baseball philosophers were boys of summer, coltish and carefree. Now they're a bunch of fart-knockers, standing in the driveway at dusk trying to remember where they put the car keys. The show is the final out as seen through the eyes of Forrest Gump.

It's not that I'm immune to such maunderings. I'm a guy. I can relate to sensitive-guy stuff. My grandfather used to take me to Orioles games in Memorial Stadium during the "baby birds" era of the early sixties, when Jim Gentile did splits at first and Brooks Robinson was a goalie at third, stopping everything that whizzed his way. The voice of Orioles announcer Chuck Thompson is as familiar to me as my father's. I was in the stadium when Frank Robinson hit the only home run ever to clear the bleachers. But for me the best baseball books—from Roger Angell's "The Summer Game" to Jim Bouton's "Ball Four" and Thomas Boswell's collections—do a better job of supplying the sight/sound/smell atmosphere, the team dynamics, and the social backdrop of pennant races than Burns's show-and-tell presentation. The texture of prose offers more connective tissue to one's memories than a barrage of news clips. By the time "Baseball" gets to the sixties, it reaches for relevance by juxtaposing plays at third base with shots of protesters being clubbed. But, no matter what's happening in the streets, there are still harmonicas on the soundtrack and Garrison Keillor sounding like a breakfast-cereal ad. "Baseball" seldom abandons its urbane folksiness, its pious streak. Ken Burns is a very square filmmaker.

Despite the flat stretches, there are enjoyable segments in "Baseball." Given the nature of the subject and the length of the documentary, there could hardly not be. It's a kick seeing the reel of tantrums thrown by former Orioles manager Earl Weaver, and the chapter on the curse of the Red Sox—which culminates in Mookie Wilson's ground ball trickling through Bill Buckner's gimpy legs in the World Series—makes you both laugh and flinch with sympathy. The ordeal of Jackie Robinson, who broke baseball's color barrier only to endure showers of verbal abuse and spit, is superbly rendered, and so is the burning coal at the heart of the knockdown artist Bob Gibson. These episodes are outbursts of ornery humanity in what is largely a sacred scroll. For Burns and his backup singers, baseball equals democracy equals America equals eternal promise. A baseball stadium is an outdoor cathedral—it's where we go to get religion.

After "Baseball" reaches its chronological finish, it pauses for a long, reverential coda that recapitulates its themes and attempts to squeeze tears from the audience. As a lone piano nudges the National Anthem to life, we see ballpark lights at red sunset, a string of Kodak moments showing Little Leaguers missing fly balls and children running to home plate, and black-and-white footage of baseball stars seeming to beckon us from the great beyond. On the voice-over track, John Chancellor utters one last ode to baseball, celebrating its "imperishable hope" and its natural rhythms: "It follows the seasons, beginning each year with the fond expectancy of springtime and ending with the hard facts of autumn." One hard fact of this autumn is that the 1994 baseball season is lost, and a lot of us miss it much less than we thought we would. Baseball will survive the strike—it will even survive the noble boredom of "Baseball"—but I suspect that a deep bond has been broken for good. By the end of Ken Burns's film, the words and music of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" sound sadly corny and antiquated. ♦

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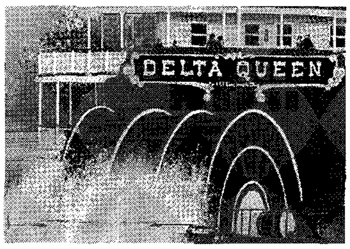

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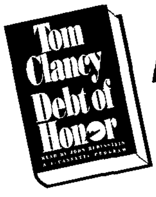

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LORDS OF THE RING

BY JOHN RICHARDSON

Bayreuth: A History of the Wagner Festival
by Frederic Spotts
(Yale; $35)

Acts: The Autobiography of Wolfgang Wagner
by Wolfgang Wagner
(Weidenfeld & Nicolson; £25)

As you climb Bayreuth's hallowed Green Hill—that "psychic spa," as it was once dubbed—to the Festspielhaus, the Wagnerian *Schwärmerei* is as palpable as the glue on flypaper. Outside the theatre, pilgrims bearing signs that read "*Ich brauche Karten*"—"I need tickets"—set upon the chosen. Each season, there are some half-million requests for a mere fifty-eight thousand tickets. Hence this mob of supplicants, some of them proffering banknotes, some of them optimistically wearing black tie. One very old woman in a very old evening dress held together with an iron brooch thrusts a hundred-mark bill at one and all. Somehow, she always gets in.

Inside the Festspielhaus, the spell of the old wizard is even more palpable. There are none of the usual appurtenances of an opera house: no foyer, bar, or grand staircase, nowhere to mingle. Wagner hated the idea of people preening inside his theatre; they were there to listen to the music, and socializing had to take place outside. It still does. The spectacle of high fashion coming to grief in the cruel afternoon sun would have pleased him. The auditorium, big but not too big (it holds just over nineteen hundred people), is like a great wooden sound box—arguably the finest place in the world to see as well as hear opera. Because the minimally upholstered wooden seats are steeply raked, as in a Greek amphitheatre, the sight lines could hardly be better. The only snag: the auditorium is as hot as a Turkish bath. The festival traditionally takes place at the height of summer, but the hum of air-conditioners might mar the sacrosanct sound, so they are not used. The temperature inside the auditorium soars—it reached a hundred and ten degrees at the beginning of this year's festival. In the depths of the orchestra pit, which Wagner rightly insisted on keeping partially covered, it must have been even higher. "At the end of each performance, I had the feeling I couldn't go on anymore," Sir Georg Solti once said. "People have no idea what the suffering is in that pit."

Precisely at six o'clock—for "Das Rheingold," the first opera of the Ring cycle (four o'clock for the three longer operas in the cycle)—the doors of the auditorium are locked, barring entry, and an all-enveloping darkness descends, along with an all-enveloping silence, the famous "Bayreuth hush." There's no applause, of course, for the conductor; Wagner preferred to keep conductors out of the spotlight. And then that first E-flat emerges from the darkness, as if from the primeval ooze of the Rhine, and the faintest wash of light suffuses the gray velvet curtain; the effect is of looking at the sun through closed eyelids. The acoustics have the same ineffable quality. If James Levine, the conductor of the new production of the Ring, could not resist revelling in the beauty of the sound, dawdling over soaring detail—albeit at some loss of tension and fireworks—one could hardly blame him.

Nevertheless, as Frederic Spotts

JEFF JACKSON

points out in his scholarly yet lively "Bayreuth: A History of the Wagner Festival," the pit has acoustic drawbacks:

> With so much sound trapped inside [it] the unfortunate musicians are at times nearly overpowered by the volume. Able to hear only the players next to them, they have no sense of the overall orchestral sound, much less the voices on stage, and therefore cannot be certain whether they are playing too loud or too soft, too fast or too slow.

There is a further complication:

> The orchestral sound does not flow . . . directly into the auditorium but instead is projected onto the stage . . . before rebounding into the auditorium. Only then and there do voices and orchestra meet. . . . In other houses, singers follow the conductor's baton. Were they to do so at Bayreuth, their voices would reach the auditorium before the instrumental sound. They must therefore lag behind the beat, how much behind depending on the stage sets. . . . Attempts to compensate can mean that the voices and the orchestra never come together.

Alas, the staging at Bayreuth is seldom worthy of the wonderful sounds that emerge from the orchestra pit. This year, the designer and the director found even less favor than usual, but then booing new productions of the Ring has become a Bayreuth tradition. Wolfgang Wagner, one of the composer's grandsons, who has run the festival since 1966, claims in his autobiography, "Acts," to be "delighted when critics are provoked by my work." This would be hard to believe—the book is extremely guarded—were it not for the fact that provocation plays a key part in Wolfgang's strategy. For fear of being thought politically or artistically incorrect, he has de-Nazified his grandfather's operas—sometimes to the point of de-Wagnerizing them. Hence his choice of experimental directors with little or no Wagnerian experience. On one occasion—his choice of Patrice Chéreau to direct the 1976 Ring—this strategy paid off. Chéreau's only previous acquaintance with Wagner was to have slept through "Die Walküre"; Pierre Boulez, the conductor that year, was regarded as a dangerous modernist by the more hidebound members of the orchestra. The iconoclastic production caused such an uproar, Wolfgang recalls, that his wife had "half the bodice of her evening gown torn off," and another woman lost part of an earlobe as well as an earring. The furor did Bayreuth's reputation a world of good. In no time, the production came to be accepted as a breakthrough. Still, Chéreau's vast success has had one unfortunate consequence: it challenged his successors—Sir Peter Hall, Harry Kupfer, and, now, Alfred Kirchner—to be even more outré. Their productions of the Ring have indeed proved provocative, but generally in modish, gimmicky ways. In his history, which is all the more absorbing for being exhaustively documented, Spotts lays the blame for this trend on Wolfgang Wagner, who took over the festival from his brilliant elder brother, Wieland. "What had been done by Wieland on a high intellectual plane was now accomplished by deliberate provocation and scandal; the scalpel was replaced by the meat cleaver," Spotts argues. Setting these differences in a historical perspective, he tells a riveting story.

PROBLEMS started soon after the composer died, in 1883. His manipulative widow—Liszt's illegitimate daughter, Cosima—seized control of the festival theatre, which Wagner had founded as a shrine to himself seven years before. She proceeded to run it with an iron claw. George Bernard Shaw, the most eloquent of Wagnerites, lit into her for having "no function to perform except the illegitimate one of chief remembrancer," and for countenancing, as Spotts puts it, "poor stage management and drastic overacting." Wagner's only son, Siegfried, who was born in 1869, was too young to play much of a role in those early years. By the time he was twenty-seven, however, he was conducting at the Festspielhaus; and ten years later, when successive heart attacks had reduced his formidable mother to a wraith, he took over the administration. She lingered on for years; her grandchildren would catch an occasional glimpse of her in a silver kimono, her borzoi profile emerging from a cascade of silver hair—eyesight, memory, and marbles all gone. Cosima died in 1930, at the age of ninety-two. Siegfried outlived her by a few months.

Siegfried proved to be an effective administrator. He was friendly, genial, and open-minded—the opposite of his sacred monster of a father in every respect except in his penchant for men as well as women. "I love no woman, no

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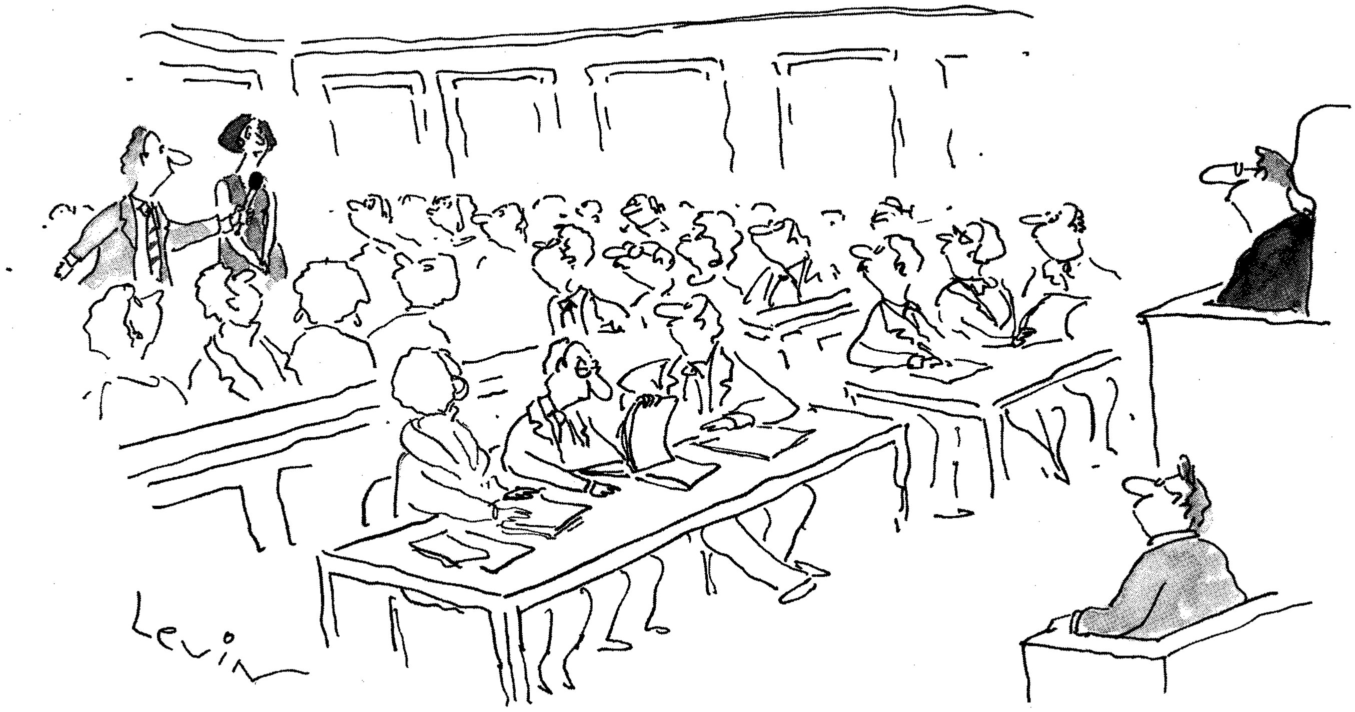

"My question is for the medical examiner."

• •

parents, no brother, no relatives, none but you!" Richard Wagner had gushed to the enamored King Ludwig. (Wagner was once known in Munich as Lolotte, after an earlier royal favorite, Lola Montez.) At one point, the composer even tried to pass off Paul von Joukowsky—the beguiling designer of "Parsifal," whom he had lured away from Henry James—as his son. Wagner apparently did not consummate such crushes; Siegfried did. Hence problems with blackmailers and police; hence, too, the need for a wife. Just after the start of the First World War, Siegfried married an eighteen-year-old orphan, Winifred Williams, who was predominantly Welsh by birth but had been reared largely in Germany. Like Alberich's theft of the ring, their union initiated a chain of disasters, which continues to this day. The family villa in Bayreuth, Wahnfried, where Winifred went to live, looks out on the composer's grave, which is still festooned at festival time with giant wreaths from various Wagner associations. Winifred was expected to dust the composer's locked piano and other sacred relics and perpetuate the dynasty. Between 1917 and 1920, she produced four little Wagners—Wieland, Friedelind, Wolfgang, and Verena—but Siegfried was always her principal concern.

Siegfried's sister Eva had married Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the English racist and proto-Fascist, in 1908, and he turned Wahnfried into a hive of anti-Semitic intrigue. Perhaps life in this mausoleum with the eerie widow and the Norn-like aunts would have warped anyone's psyche; in due course, Winifred followed in Chamberlain's footsteps.

In September of 1923, Hitler—a Wagner-obsessed crank not then taken very seriously—came to Bayreuth and captivated her. He supplied her with a cause; she supplied him with the backing of the most illustrious name in German culture. When, a few weeks later, the Beer Hall Putsch collapsed and Hitler was jailed, Winifred publicly endorsed him. From then on, she was one of his closest women friends. He allowed her and her children to call him by his nickname, Wolf; he called her Wini. And Wahnfried became Wolf's second home. Spotts describes him arriving "under cover of darkness," helping to "put the children to bed and tell them stories." In Spotts' view, "This warm, familial atmosphere was of enormous emotional importance to Hitler." He explains, "Wahnfried was the home he had not known since childhood; Winifred was the wife he never married; above all, the children were the offspring he never had. . . . 'Uncle Wolf' clearly adored them and they him. As a child, Wieland is said once to have remarked that Wolf should have been their father and their father Uncle." It seems that, besides putting the little Wagners to bed, Hitler sexually abused Wieland. Spotts has revealed this incident—vouchsafed to him by one of Wieland's children—only since the publication of his book; he had omitted it as irrelevant. But Hitler yearned to be a designer for the operatic stage, and he may have instilled some of his aspiration in his young victim.

While Winifred promoted Wagner as the "Führer of German art" and the Festspielhaus as Hitler's court theatre, Siegfried, who did not share his wife's fanaticism, saw the risks inherent in politicizing Bayreuth. He proved to be right. After his death, she would plead with Wolf to stop Goebbels' minions from taking over the festival. She also urged Hitler to see that Nazi organizations bought up the tickets that Jewish Wagnerians were no longer around to purchase. Thereafter, thanks to Wolf, the festival was better funded than ever. To her credit, Winifred fought to keep

Jewish and homosexual soloists appearing at Bayreuth; and she refused to fire her producer and sometime conductor, Heinz Tietjen, and her stage designer, Emil Preetorius—a famously effective team—both of whom Goebbels detested. Tietjen disregarded an official proposal to Nazify the loathsome Gibichungs' banners with swastikas. Ironically, most of the other Nazi leaders were too crass to share Hitler's cult of Wagner. Winifred, always the élitist, barred the "Jew baiter" Julius Streicher from the festival, Wolfgang recalls—not for the man's vile views but because he was "proletarian."

HITLER'S attachment to Wieland "saved his life," or so Winifred said. As a potential national treasure, Wieland was exempted from military service and left free to study art. By 1940, he had become more interested in opera and, thanks to Goebbels, had been put in charge of opera productions at Altenburg. It was there that he sharpened the skills with which he came to revolutionize opera production. Richard Wagner's axiom—one that he himself seldom, if ever, practiced—that the stage should be rid of anything superfluous became Wieland's guiding concept. His pared-down Ring at Altenburg anticipated his breakthrough 1951 Ring at Bayreuth.

Wolfgang Wagner had the good fortune to be wounded, not very seriously, at the outset of the war. Exempted as an invalid from further military service, he was able to work at the Berlin Staatsoper and study music theory as well. In addition to training to be a stage manager, Wolfgang prepared himself to be a producer. By the end of the war, his firsthand experience of opera production, his mastery of its nuts and bolts (not to mention marks and pfennigs), and his working knowledge of music made him the ideal counterpart to his brother; and in 1951 they triumphantly revived the festival. Meanwhile, his two sisters went their separate ways. Friedelind became an ardent anti-Nazi and in 1938 fled Germany and ended up in New York. Her subsequent broadcasts to Germany denouncing the Nazis apparently hit home. In 1945, she wrote a memoir, "Heritage of Fire: The Story of Richard Wagner's Granddaughter," which is too angry to be reliable. As for Verena, she married a high-ranking S.S. man.

For Wieland and Wolfgang, their mother's fervent Nazism posed a serious threat when the war ended. She was sole owner of the Wagner properties, and, as an accused Nazi offender, was in danger of losing them. Yet, far from abjuring Hitler in the postwar years, Winifred fiercely maintained him to have been "kind, noble, and helpful." The American authorities sentenced her to tough "expiatory penalties," among them disenfranchisement and confiscation of sixty per cent of her assets. Testimony that she had saved Jews and homosexuals from concentration camps subsequently won her a "Persil certificate," as vouchers of de-Nazification were informally known. Justice was not served. Winifred continued to close her letters to her friends with the figure 88—a reference to the eighth letter of the alphabet and thus code for "Heil Hitler"—and often used the abbreviation U.S.A., which, ironically, stood for *unser seliger Adolf* (our blessed Adolf). In January of 1949, after she was nominally de-Nazified, Winifred announced that she was entrusting the management of future festivals to her two sons. She had little choice, but, even so, it was an act she came passionately to regret. In 1954, when Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau arrived in Bayreuth to sing Wolfram, he was horrified to hear Winifred exalt Hitler and denounce her two pet hatreds, Wieland and Picasso.

With Winifred effectively out of the way, Wieland set about purging his grandfather's operas of the Nazi taint and of the awful Hunnish piety that had been promoted by generations of Wagnerian fanatics. Wieland saw that the operas could have a far broader and deeper resonance once they were stripped down to essentials. Wolfgang was a partner in this endeavor, but his productions lacked Wieland's innovative genius. Where Wolfgang excelled was in setting up the necessary infrastructure. Thanks to their joint efforts, the Festspielhaus came to boast one of the most technologically advanced stage and lighting systems in the world, and with it Wieland created his miraculous, miragelike sets.

When the festival reopened, on July 30, 1951, Wieland's "Parsifal" left no one in

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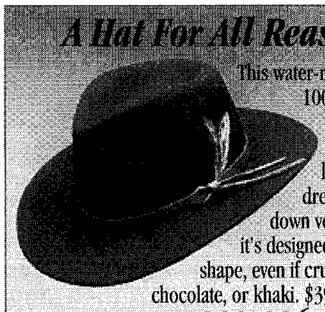

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any doubt "that the old orthodoxy . . . had been irreparably shattered," Spotts writes. Gone were the sacrosanct buildings and Klingsor's odalisque-filled garden; gone, too, was the hokey religiosity that Nietzsche had found so distasteful. Wieland had substituted a quasi-Jungian interpretation, from which "Parsifal" emerged as a greatly enhanced work. Wieland subjected the Ring to the same process of reduction. Instead of turning the operas into fairy tales that, according to Spotts, at times "falsified the music and blunted the dramatic intent," and erected "a barrier between Wagner's creation and the real world," Wieland's minimalism widened their range of reference. This minimalism, Spotts suggests, might well be a reflection of Wieland's youthful experience of "seeing Hitler sit through the Ring and not realize that it was about himself and his Reich."

Members of the Old Guard were so outraged by Wieland's innovations that they founded the Society for the Faithful Presentation of Richard Wagner's Dramas. They resorted to sabotage, and even began legal action to have the old sets brought back—also the old costumes, which had long since vanished from the wardrobe onto the backs of refugees and local whores. Wieland, undeterred by his critics, set about de-Nazifying the Nazis' favorite opera, "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg." When it emerged that he had eradicated medieval Nuremberg—*Gemütlichkeit*, gables, and all—boos broke out in the Festspielhaus for the first time. By the late fifties, however, the more militant opposition had been vanquished. Sopranos in corncob braids and Merovingian crowns, heldentenors in winged helmets, armor, and cross-gartering had come to seem as obsolete as swastikas. Wieland's reductivism had become the new orthodoxy.

In 1956, Winifred, who had been living in the country, moved into her husband's old house, next door to Wahnfried, and proceeded to behave provocatively, assuring her grandchildren that the concentration camps never existed. At one point, Wieland was obliged to build a much higher wall between the properties. Meanwhile, his relationship with Wolfgang, which had never been entirely cordial, grew acrimonious. Wieland was a difficult man—temperamental, high-handed, tormented—and was unable to hide his contempt for his brother's stagecraft. Fanned by Winifred, resentment reached such a pitch that the two men's families no longer spoke. Then, in 1966, Wieland died of lung cancer. His death triggered further feuds. Wolfgang, for whom the scars of sibling rivalry would never fade, came into his own and set about destroying Wieland's reputation. To be sure, Wolfgang's memoir, which is so informative about his own productions, is remarkably uncommunicative about his brother's death and its aftermath. Many others in his family have shown no such compunction, and have provided Spotts with a wealth of inside information.

Wolfgang, Spotts reports, "destroyed the models of Wieland's productions and . . . sacked almost everyone who had worked with him"; "repudiated the notion that his brother had revolutionized Wagnerian opera"; complained that "Wieland had stolen the limelight"; and rarely missed an "opportunity to assert that Wieland had been a Nazi." Wolfgang also exiled Wieland's widow, Gertrud, and children from Wahnfried and from the festival. When Gertrud protested, an unsympathetic Winifred responded, "After the forester dies, the forester's family has to leave the forester's house." Gertrud went to live on the island of Sylt, in the North Sea, and there she recently finished a memoir. Being banished from Wahnfried has become a Wagnerian tradition. By now, a great many members of the family, including Wolfgang's son Gottfried (who is at work on *his* book about the family), have been exiled.

Wieland's act would have been a difficult one for anyone to follow; for Wolfgang it must have been traumatic. Whereas Wieland's work had "the mark of genius," Spotts writes, Wolfgang's had "the sign of workmanship. Wieland soared; Wolfgang plodded. Wieland had blazed a new path; Wolfgang appeared to have no clear sense of direction." By replacing his brother's productions with his own, Wolfgang antagonized some of the more serious critics. Except for a popular centenary production of "Meistersinger," in 1968, which brought back the gables and half-timbering that Wieland had jettisoned, Wolfgang's staging found little favor. In defense of his record, he states that the Festspielhaus never fails to attract ten times as many people as it can hold. True, but some of the best singers and conductors are not always keen to return there.

Meanwhile, the Wagner family continued to self-destruct—as often as not, in public. One of Wieland's daughters, Nike—a passionate anti-Nazi, like her aunt Friedelind—described her family in a 1976 German newspaper article as "an Atreus clan, in which fathers castrate sons and mothers smother them with love, in which mothers cast out daughters and daughters defame mothers, in which brother harms brother and brothers rise against sisters just as sisters rise against brothers, in which daughters are disowned and daughters-in-law are pushed aside, in which men are feminine and women masculine and in which a great-grandchild nibbles on the liver of another great-grandchild."

DESPITE the discord, in 1973 Wolfgang, his mother (Winifred lived until 1980), and the other heirs finally deeded the Festspielhaus and entrusted the rest of the Wagner estate to a semiofficial foundation—a move that will assure the festival's survival. Wolfgang has been left in charge, but, since he is seventy-five, there is much conjecture as to his successor. It will not be any of the younger Wagners, Wolfgang has decreed; none of them, "whether female or male, possesses the qualifications to run Bayreuth." And, as if he were Donner, he launches thunderbolts at his son Gottfried, though without actually naming him. "To accuse him of a pronounced 'image neurosis' would be plainly offensive, so I shall refrain from doing so," he writes.

Like Wolfgang's imprecations, his recent Rings have had a way of going off half cocked. To lay to rest the ghosts of the past—above all, anti-Semitism and antimodernism—and insure the survival of the Wagner cult into a new age, he is determined that the festival's opera productions should be the dernier cri in dramaturgy. The Chéreau Ring succeeded, but that was eighteen years ago; the current production—which made its début this summer and is scheduled to run for five years—is something of a failure.

When the curtains parted on the first performance of the first opera, "Das Rheingold," in the new Ring, it was a source of dismay to find that we had landed in some postmodernist jungle gym rather than on the bed of the Rhine. The designer, Gudrun Müller, who prefers to be known as Rosalie, has worked against the primordial, mythic nature of Wagner's work. She has dressed the Rhinemaidens—usually a bit of a joke—as biker gymnasts in tight Lycra shorts and Doc Martens and set them spinning on a helical carrousel. From the vanes of this whirligig, one of the maidens occasionally dangled upside down to taunt the villainous Alberich, who, for some distracting symbolic reason, wore one green sneaker. Given the delicacy of the acoustics, the spinning and lunging of the whirligig inevitably had an adverse effect on the Rhinemaidens' singing and on our perception of it. The audience made plain its distaste for this kitschy postmodernism when the curtain fell on the last scene.

No matter that devices like this whirligig look as if they had been carted over the Berlin Wall; Wolfgang evidently thinks that all this is genuinely avant-garde, and so do Alfred Kirchner and Rosalie. While their predecessor Harry Kupfer (whose production became known as the Chernobyl Ring) was interested in making political, psychological, and ecological points, Kirchner and Rosalie seek to reconcile pretentious, punkish symbolism with a basically traditional approach. The singers in the new Ring may look as if they were outfitted by Comme des Garçons, but they followed Wagner's stage directions as faithfully as if they were wearing chain mail.

The hybrid nature of the new Ring—its superficial modernity and fundamental traditionalism—is reflected in its dependence on the good old *Scheibe,* the large, disk-shaped platform that Wieland Wagner devised for his 1951 Ring and Wolfgang used for his 1960 and 1970 ones. The *Scheibe* can stand for just about any place—meadow or river, Heaven or Hell—according to the lighting. It lends itself to big, dramatic effects and makes everything look cosmologically Wagnerian. But by now it has become a cliché that no amount of gimmickry can conceal, as emerged in the technologically ambitious *hojotoho* scene

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of "Die Walküre." The Valkyries had to sing their songs of battle while maneuvering voluminous see-through panniers into individual elevators the size of coffins, which bobbed up and down like yo-yos (and sometimes, disconcertingly, sidewise). This cumbersome, Andrew Lloyd Webberish showstopper was supposed to evoke the Valkyries' unstageable rides through the sky. A roller coaster would have been more to the point and less distracting. When water or fire was called for, Rosalie transformed the stage into the semblance of a huge Nintendo screen.

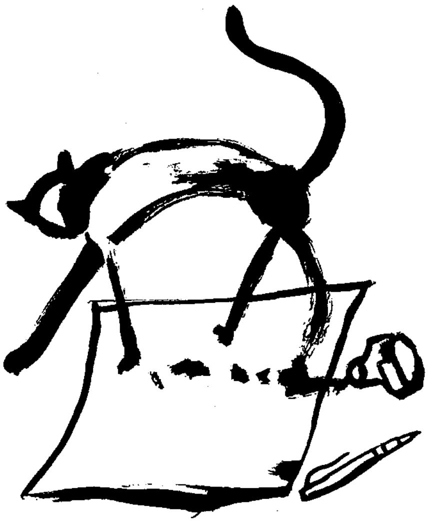
The sets are less bothersome, however, than the preposterous, asymmetrical costumes. "The colour of a costume is as important as the sound of a violin," Spotts reports Wieland Wagner as saying. Rosalie has taken this dubious maxim to heart. She has devised a simplistic system of color coding and has also added sculptural excrescences to costumes that carry symbolism to tedious lengths. A towering, spiky wing sticking out from Fricka's right shoulder became a standing joke; the press corps decided that it demonstrated how Wotan lost his eye. For once, fashion victims in the audience had serious competition from the stage. Nor were Rosalie's getups kind to the singers. The Valkyries had to *hojotoho* not only in panniers but also in bright-red classical "torsos" for which Dolly Parton might have modelled. Rosalie's principal victim, however, was John Tomlinson, the excellent English Wotan. This forthright, masculine singer looked embarrassed in stiff, Day-Glo sarongs, disoriented in a blindfold of a helmet. No wonder he took the helmet off and brandished it during curtain calls.

Reservations about the staging must be set against praise for most of the singing. The Danish Poul Elming was a treat as Siegmund—a heldentenor in the making. As for Loge, Siegfried Jerusalem triumphed over a leather bodysuit, a plastic frock coat, and what looked like red chopsticks in his headband, and gave the role a heroic dimension. Wolfgang Schmidt, a noisy, unappealing Siegfried, had to contend with a bright-turquoise-and-white "resort" outfit, which conformed to the production's color code but smacked of Graceland.

The most thrilling of the women was the veteran Hanna Schwarz. Her voice was unimpaired, the perfect vehicle for Fricka's passionate eloquence. As Brünnhilde, the Wisconsin-born Deborah Polaski has a steadier voice than her great predecessor Dame Gwyneth Jones, and is appropriately Amazonian in carriage, but she often sounds strained, as if making a muscle.

THE night after the Ring cycle ended—much better than it had started, with a sharply focussed "Götterdämmerung"—there was a performance of the "Tristan und Isolde" that had caused so much controversy at its début, last season. A year later, it seemed close to perfection, musically, dramatically, and visually—especially in the first act, in which the lovers looked dissolved in light. It was one of those rare occasions when members of the audience could feel that they, too, had swallowed the love potion. The singing was memorable: Waltraud Meier incandescent in the "Liebestod"; Jerusalem thrilling throughout. Daniel Barenboim's conducting was nothing if not passionate. Heiner Müller's production had originality, magic, and above all a dark, poetic conception well attuned to this ominous opera and the ominous end of this century. The audience lightly booed Müller—out of habit, it seemed. But here, at long last, was the transcendental experience one had hoped for from that psychic spa on the Green Hill.

By Spotts' account, Bayreuth's greatest years—the years of Furtwängler and Toscanini, Melchior and Leider—coincided with the rise of Nazism. Wolfgang takes enormous pride in having eradicated Nazism from Bayreuth—in having, as it were, obtained a Persil certificate for his grandfather and his work. But was this cleansing such a good idea? Would it not have been wiser for Bayreuth to face up to history, not to speak of Wagner's magnificent and monstrous genius, and put on a totalitarian production of the Ring, with swastikas on the Gibichungs' banners, if need be? That would exorcise Nazism more effectively than postmodernist playpens. To deny the past, to overlook Wagner's profound anti-Semitism, is morally and, to some extent, aesthetically evasive. ♦



BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

White Man's Grave
by Richard Dooling
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22)

FIRST and Third Worlds collide in this dark comedy, in which Dooling explores one of their largest common denominators—absurdity. Michael Killigan, a fourth-year Peace Corps volunteer, suddenly vanishes from a Mende village in Sierra Leone, and his father, a crude but hilarious bankruptcy lawyer, funds a desperate search for him from behind his desk. At the same time, Killigan's best friend, Boone Westfall, begins his own search by heading directly for Sierra Leone, where the speculation over Killigan's disappearance proves to be as varied as the speculators. Has his interference in the current elections set him up for murder, as the Peace Corps suggests? Has he been the innocent victim of a Liberian border incursion, as American officials suggest? Or is his disappearance much more complicated and sinister, as some of the Mende tribespeople believe? Dooling, alternating his narrative between Sierra Leone's turmoil of witchcraft and poisoned politics and Indiana's air-conditioned and stress-managed landscape, reveals their surprising similarities with ease and wit. The hexes and counterhexes of a village witch-hunting ceremony appear remarkably similar to the suits and countersuits of a bankruptcy court, and what Boone finally discovers is that reality in both worlds is a construct of faith.

Ambition & Love
by Ward Just
(Houghton Mifflin; $22.95)

IN Just's sixteenth book, two Americans in Paris meet unexpectedly in the Musée d'Orsay and recognize each other from Chicago's North Side. Off they go to lunch, during which Georgia, a fiercely independent painter, tells Harry, a successful writer of mysteries, where she has been since their Midwestern days. Harry virtually disappears as he takes over and narrates Georgia's story, and is a bit like Just himself: a keen observer who keeps his cards close to his chest. Georgia's struggle to adapt her life to her art—in a listless Southern California ménage à trois, in her unhealthy, nocturnal life in Paris—is, surprisingly, less enticing than the detective-novel atmosphere in which it unfolds. Just evokes the clamorous streets and café interiors, along with a certain kind of hopeful American drunkenness that Georgia falls into nightly, with a filmic, moody intensity; he is one of those writers who still live by the rule that what they reveal should be shown, not told. As Georgia becomes entangled with an émigré musician whose papers "are not quite in order," her personal tale begins to sound the deeper notes of chaotic end-of-the-millennium politics. But, to the reader's dismay, the book is over just as Harry seems at the point of solving its main mystery—that of his own abiding interest in Georgia's story. Harry—and Just—should have written one more chapter.

The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole
by Frederick Rolfe
(Braziller; $20)

THE eccentric and perverse English Catholic convert who called himself Baron Corvo finished this maddening and wonderful novel in 1910, but its first edition was drastically altered to avoid libelling the author's real-life enemies, who were easily recognizable in it. The plot ostensibly concerns the love of Nicholas Crabbe (an eccentric and perverse English Catholic convert) for a girl named Ermenegilda; he rescues her from the wreckage of an earthquake in Calabria, then brings her, disguised as a boy called Zildo, to Venice to be his personal gondolier. In fact, the novel is chiefly about the wrongs inflicted on Crabbe, and it is perfectly clear that he thoroughly deserves all his sufferings. Yet one roots for this impossible character; his energy, his spleen, and the honesty with which his unbalanced mind is portrayed are ultimately engaging. Rolfe's willfully inventive way with language is a treat, too, once you get used to his unconventional spellings, and Venice is presented as vividly as it has ever been.

Ancestral Truths
by Sara Maitland
(Holt; $22.50)

ON a climb to the top of the highest mountain in Zimbabwe, Clare Kerslake, a British photographer, loses her lover and her hand. She cannot remember how her hand came to be smashed, or how the odious David came to disappear—only that she wanted him dead. The catastrophe pushes her back into the arms of her noisy and affectionate extended family, which traditionally spends its summer holiday in a hunting lodge on its ancestral Scottish estate. There Clare's five-year-old deaf niece, whose only language is Sign, falls in love with The Hand, the despised high-tech prosthesis with which Clare has been fitted. The novel's domestic intricacies provide unexpected delights, yet its boundaries are curiously fluid and difficult to grasp, like the sophisticated math theorem pondered by one of Clare's sisters. Many questions are left unanswered, but questions and questioners alike shine with intelligence and an almost nineteenth-century concern for ideals. ◆

FROM OUR PAGES

(All or part of these recently published books originally appeared in The New Yorker.)

A Silence Opens
by Amy Clampitt
(Knopf; $20)

Camaro City
by Alan Sternberg
(Harcourt Brace; $19.95)

Open Secrets
by Alice Munro
(Knopf; $23)

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

MULLIGAN STEW

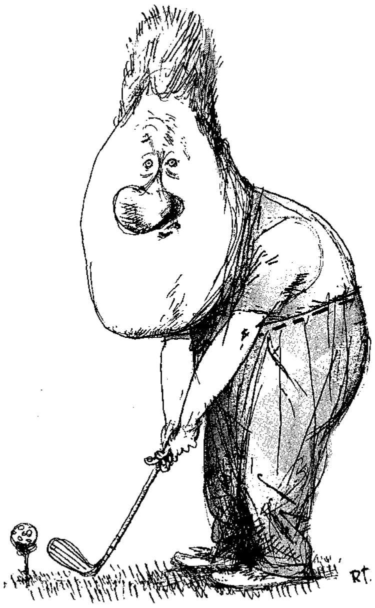
BY CHARLES McGRATH

BILL CLINTON and I spent our summer vacations the same way—playing golf in southeastern Massachusetts. We're almost exactly the same age, and, as far as I can make out, our games are in a similar state of disrepair. Bill played at the Farm Neck Golf Club, on the Vineyard, with big shots like Vernon Jordan, Bill Gates, and Warren Buffett. I played at the Old Hardpan public links, on the mainland—by myself sometimes, and also with various retired strangers who invited me to join them. I played one morning with a taciturn seventy-eight-year-old named Pete, a former electrician, who had a swing that was three feet long, end to end, and who shot 70; he would have had a 69 except for taking three putts on the seventeenth. I also played a highly instructive round with Buddy, Henry, and Howard, three onetime limo drivers, who talked a lot about "nooky" and about which celebrities left the biggest tips. All these guys were cheerful testaments to the great democratic miracle of American senior citizenhood. They grew up in the Depression, worked hard, bought houses, and sent their kids to college, and now they had the time and the means to travel, go out to nice restaurants, and play golf whenever they felt like it. They were all amazing ball-hawks. After hitting their drives, they would pick up their bags and disappear into the woods, emerging a couple of hundred yards down the fairway with two or three brand-new Titleists in their pockets—balls that had been abandoned, presumably, by impatient younger guys, whizzing by in their electric carts.

According to the papers, Clinton hit into the woods frequently; he could have profited from the tip Pete gave me. You square your shoulders, take a deep breath, and aim *directly for the trees*—on the assumption that the ball never goes where you want it to. Clinton's swing may also suffer from unreleased tension in the post-follow-through phase. He isn't allowed to curse, in other words. Apparently, his regular response to an errant drive—at least, when reporters or members of the voting public are within earshot—is to groan "Oh, no!" The preferred technique, as any good golfer knows, is to whomp the clubhead on the ground and yell "Son of a *bitch!*" or "Oh, shit!" Buddy could give the Prez some good lessons on this.

Clinton has not been shy, though, about availing himself of the mulligan—that ancient golfing custom whereby a player unhappy with his first shot grants himself a second, with no penalty. He took a mully on his first day, for example, on the opening hole, a 360-yard par 4, after cranking his drive into the pines. There are killjoys—including, I imagine, some of the members of Farm Neck—who hold a dim view of mulligans, believing that they encourage character weakness. At Old Hardpan, mullies are the rule rather than the exception, and so is "walking the dog"—poking the ball along with your clubhead until you've moved it to a nicer lie.

My own position with regard to mulligans is liberal in the extreme; I've been known to take a mulligan on top of a mulligan, and sometimes, if my next shot proves worse than the one before, to take an un-mulligan. But I am not the President of the United States; it's not my job to set an example for the American electorate and the entire free world. In my heart of hearts, I also know the difference between an honest score and one that has been mulligan-enhanced. What worries me about Clinton is that the other day, after finishing the round in which he'd taken his first drive over, he bragged about shooting an 82, and seemed to genuinely believe that he was only three strokes away from his grand, self-proclaimed goal of breaking into the seventies. It was a little too reminiscent of that moment in the health-care debate when, after insisting that nothing less than one-hundred-percent coverage would do, he settled for ninety-five—or of the two or three or four mullies that he's already taken on the Haiti issue. The mulligan concept, in fact, is one that this particular President might be smart to stay away from. And then there's the question of his putts. Does Bill really hole them all out, one wonders, or does he accept gimmes? At one point when I was playing with Pete, I started to knock away a putt of his, a ten-incher, and he got cross and stopped me. "If I don't hit it," he said, "how will I ever know if it would have gone in?" This maxim almost sounds like a snatch of campaign rhetoric—except that Pete is probably too *good* to be President. ♦



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